

Brit. 553th (2)

ESSAYS ON ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SUBJECTS.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

ESSAYS ON ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SUBJECTS,

AND ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS CONNECTED
WITH THE HISTORY OF ART, SCIENCE,
AND LITERATURE IN THE
MIDDLE AGES.

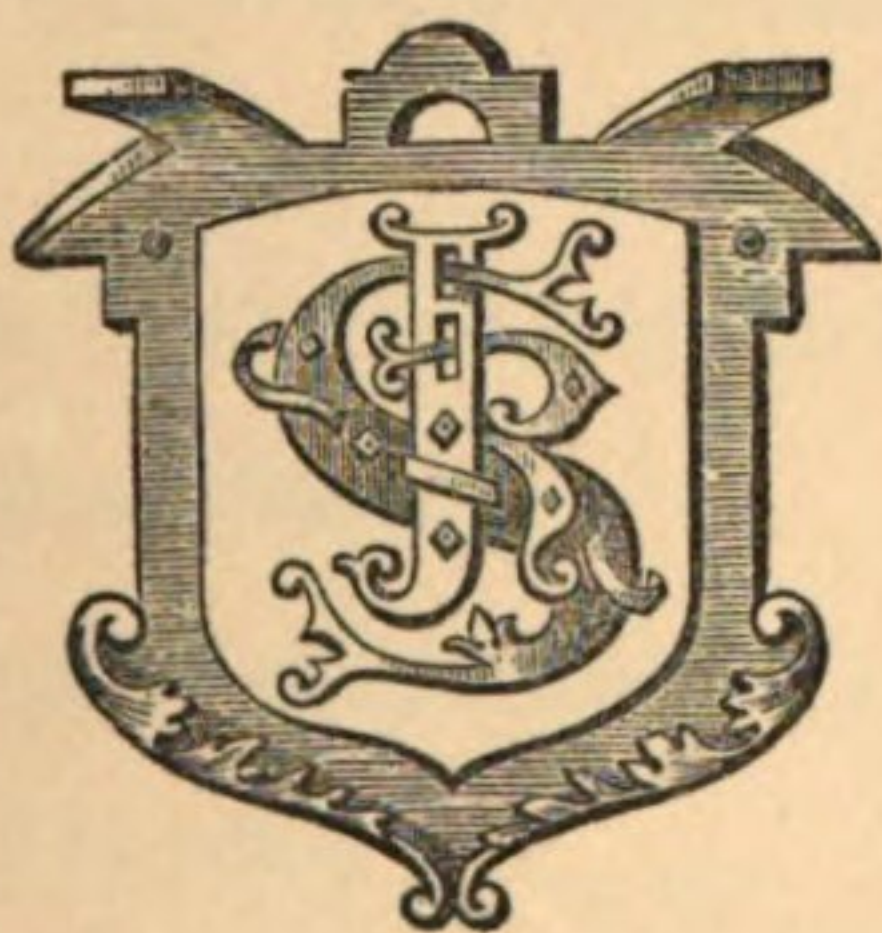
BY

THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq. M.A., F.S.A., M.R.S.L., Etc.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE OF
FRANCE (ACADEMIE DES INSCRIPTIONS ET
BELLES LETTRES.)

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

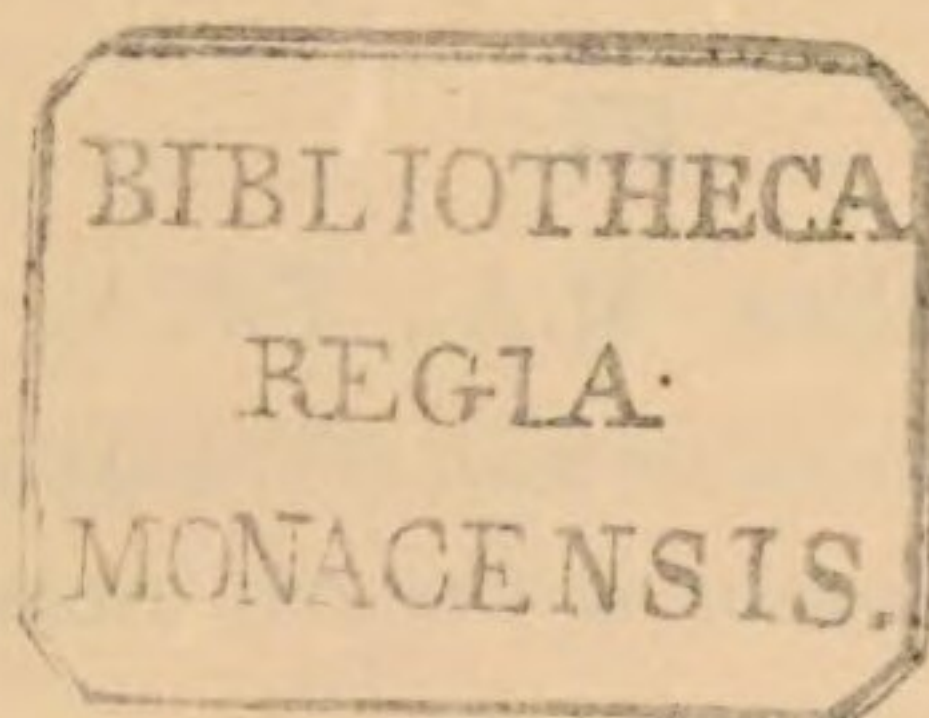


LONDON :
JOHN RUSSELL SMITH,
SOHO SQUARE.
1861.

123.

82 G

Brit. 553 th/₂





CONTENTS.

Chapter	Page
XIII. On the Ancient Map of the World preserved in Hereford Cathedral, as illustrative of the History of Geography in the Middle Ages .	1
XIV. On the History of the English Language .	28
XV. On the Abacus, or Mediæval System of Arithmetic	61
XVI. On the Antiquity of Dates expressed in Arabic Numerals	74
XVII. Remarks on an Ivory Casket of the beginning of the Fourteenth Century	88
XVIII. On the Carvings of the Stalls in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches	111
XIX. Illustrations of some questions relating to Architectural Antiquities :—	
(a) <i>Mediæval Architecture Illustrated from Illuminated Manuscripts</i>	129
(b) <i>A word on Mediæval Bridge-Builders</i> .	137

Chapter	Page
(c) <i>On the Remains of proscribed Races in Mediæval and Modern Society, as ex- plaining certain peculiarities in old Churches</i>	141
XX. <i>On the Origin of Rhymes in Mediæval Poetry, and its bearing on the Authenticity of the Early Welsh Poems</i>	151
XXI. <i>On the History of the Drama in the Middle Ages</i>	169
XXII. <i>On the Literature of the Trobadours</i> . . .	194
XXIII. <i>On the History of Comic Literature during the Middle Ages</i>	230
XXIV. <i>On the Satirical Literature of the Reformation</i>	272

PLATES.

Ivory Casket of Fourteenth Century, Plate I., to face	95
„ „ „ „ Plate II. „	98

ERRATA.

P. 94, *note*, for *Brit. MS.* read *Brit. Mus.*

P. 166. My conjecture on the date of the “Black Book of Caermarthen” is merely founded on the description by others. I have since received information which leads me to believe that this manuscript is of a considerably later date.

P. 168, l. 16, for *to as late a date*, read *to a later date*.



ESSAYS ON ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SUBJECTS.

XIII.

ON THE ANCIENT MAP OF THE WORLD PRE-
SERVED IN HEREFORD CATHEDRAL,

AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY
IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

IN the final breaking up of the Roman Empire, polite literature suffered much more than science. While there were few, if any, of the barbarians who established themselves in the Imperial provinces, capable of appreciating the pure models of composition bequeathed to them by the classic writers, many, excited by the novelties offered to their view on every side, were seized with an ardent thirst after knowledge. We know with what avidity the sciences of the Greeks and the Romans were taken up by the Arabian conquerors, who subsequently gave to them an extraordinary development. In the west, during several centuries, the knowledge received from the Romans made little or no advance; and almost the only works on science, previous to the eleventh century,

were little better than compendiums and school-books, such as the writings of Isidore and Bede.

To people who were conquering and colonizing, no science would be more attractive than that of geography, especially when they were at the same time receiving a new faith, founded on events which had occurred in countries far distant from their own homes. Many circumstances which have escaped the ravages of time, show us how much attention was paid by the Germanic conquerors to geography in the dark ages immediately following the overthrow of the Western Empire. Even the song of the bard appears to have been most welcome when it told of the different countries through which he had wandered. The fragment which has been published, under the title of the *Traveller's Song*, is one of the most remarkable relics of early Anglo-Saxon poetry. At a later period than that to which this piece evidently belongs, in the beginning of the eighth century, we learn from the letters of Boniface that, among the manuscripts then brought continually from the continent into this island, our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were particularly desirous of possessing treatises on cosmography.

There are extant two treatises on geographical science of a somewhat remarkable character, belonging to the earlier period of the middle ages. The first of these pretends to have been written by a "philosopher" of Istria named Ethicus, in a strange language, of which the alphabet is given at the end, and to have been translated or re-written in Latin by the celebrated St. Jerome, which would carry it back to the fourth century of the Christian era. But the barbarous Latin, totally dissimilar from the style of

St. Jerome, seems to condemn this account as a mere fable. It is, however, a work of great antiquity; for the age of manuscripts still preserved carries it back as far as the eighth century, and various points of internal evidence seem to fix it to a still more remote period. Its pretended author, Ethicus, is represented as a great traveller in search of geographical knowledge: at one time we find him penetrating into the depths of Asia; at another, exploring the Western Ocean, and almost reaching America—he alludes apparently to the peak of Teneriffe; and then again we find him wandering through the Britannic isles, and extending his researches to the northernmost parts of Europe. Whether he really visited the places thus described may be considered as a matter that admits of great doubt; but, concealed under an affectedly poetical but barbarous style of writing, often unintelligible, we perceive traces of geographical knowledge which we should little expect; and it is by no means improbable that in Spain he may have picked up stories of the adventures of some of the daring navigators of its western ports, whom storms or their own bold curiosity had carried out into the trackless ocean,—the extent and bounds of which were then wrapped in fearful obscurity. The cosmography of Ethicus appears, by the number of manuscripts written in this country, to have been extremely popular in England from the eighth to the eleventh (and even to the twelfth) century; but it is as yet unedited, although an excellent edition is preparing by one of the most learned geographers of the present day, M. D’Avezac of Paris.*

In the kingdoms founded by the Goths in Italy

* This has since been published, with a very learned dissertation.

and in Spain, literature and science were extensively cultivated by men who rather affectedly took to themselves the Greek title of "philosophers." Unfortunately nearly all their writings have perished amid the convulsions of a succession of wars, during which the Goths ceased to exist as a people. It was probably to one of these "philosophers" that we owe the so-called cosmography of Ethicus. Another of these Goths, who is generally considered as having lived at Ravenna, the capital of the Gothic kingdom in Italy, and as having flourished in the seventh century, but whose name is unknown, has left us a much more intelligible treatise on geography, though written in equally barbarous Latin. A remarkable feature of the work of the Geographer of Ravenna, the title by which this writer is commonly known, is the number of other writers on the same subject, or (as he calls them) "philosophers," who appear to have lived a little before his own time, who are cited by him, but who are otherwise totally unknown to us. In fact, it is through this writer alone that we are at all acquainted with the geographical literature of the preceding age. Among the rather numerous writers quoted by this anonymous geographer, are three "philosophers of the Goths" (*Gothorum philosophi*), whose names, Aithanarid, Edelwald, and Marcomir, at once evince the race to which they belonged. He quotes also frequently two Romano-African geographers, Probus and Melitianus; two Græco-Egyptians, named Cyachoris and Blantasis, who had travelled to the south of Egypt in search of knowledge; two Persians, who had written "a picture of the universe" in Greek, and whom he names Arsatius and Aphrodisianus; two Greeks, Hylas and Sardoni-
us;

and two Romans, Lallianus and Castorius. The last of these is the writer whose authority the geographer of Ravenna follows most largely. All the works of the schools represented by these names are now lost.

The treatise of the geographer of Ravenna, divided into five books, consists, in a great measure, of lists of towns in each country; and from the way in which they are given, his authorities seem often to have been maps or geographical tables like those of Ptolemy, whom also he quotes. But he has mixed the names together in so confused a manner, that, joined with the corrupt orthography, this has rendered it almost impossible now to identify many of them, although we can have no doubt that such places did exist. In Britain especially, where his list is remarkably full, he seems to have run his eye backwards and forwards in so careless a way, that he has in several instances repeated the name of the same place, as though he had found it in different parts of the island; and it is not at all improbable that he may have so far wandered beyond the limits, as to import into Britain two or three towns from the opposite coasts of Gaul and Germany.

In the writings of this geographer we meet with those theological prejudices which were beginning to trespass on the scientific discoveries of the Greeks and Romans. He shows an unwillingness to speak of any but known countries; and he evidently had no distinct conception of the form of the globe. He will not even allow, with the majority of the geographers who had gone before him, that the earth was entirely surrounded by the sea. For, says he, if such were the case, where should we find Paradise, which

the holy Scripture describes as lying in the east. He therefore states as his opinion, founded on the authority of St. Athanasius, that beyond India lay a trackless desert of unknown extent, which no mortal was permitted to pass, beyond which lay Paradise, forming the extreme east. From Paradise, as he believed, sprang the four rivers—Geon, Physon, Tigris, and Euphrates; and he could only be induced to accord any credit to the “gentile” philosophers who believed that the two latter rivers had their rise in the mountains of Armenia, on the supposition that they had come thither from Paradise by an invisible course. He believed that the ocean which washed the extremities of the earth with its waves was bounded at an unknown distance by lofty mountains, behind which the sun dropped at night as into a pit, passing under the earth to rise next morning in the east.

Barbarisms like these had already been introduced into science in the east by the Christian ascetics. An Egyptian monk of the earlier part of the sixth century, named Cosmas, and termed, from the presumed fact of his having travelled into India, Cosmas Indicopleustes, has left us a treatise on geography, which he designates by the title of *The Christian Topography of the World*, intimating thereby that it was the only system which conformed with the notions of orthodox Christianity. A system which he combats as most heretical and absurd, was that which gave to the earth the form of a globe, and which had been held by the “heathen” philosophers. He describes it as a vast oblong plain, surrounded by an immense wall which supported the blue vault of the firmament. He believed, like the geographer of Ravenna, that the sun set behind a great mountain. If we overlook the gross errors of his system, the treatise of

Cosmas gives us some slight glimpses of the condition of countries which were soon afterwards lost sight of by the Christian world for several centuries.

The treatise of the geographer of Ravenna seems to have been totally lost to the world until the manuscript was discovered and printed in the seventeenth century; and the cosmography of Ethicus, although evidently much read, appears to have had very little influence upon geographical science in succeeding ages. For we find that the books on this subject down to the twelfth century are almost all founded on Pliny, Solinus, and Isidore. Even at the end of the tenth century, the text-book on geography in England was the metrical *Periegesis* of Priscian, a translation from the Greek *Periegesis* of Dionysius.

It is surprising how little improvement had at this time been made in geographical science as taught in the schools, when we consider the many distant voyages which had been made by Anglo-Saxons in search of knowledge, and the eagerness with which accounts of distant lands had been grasped at. With the seventh century our forefathers began to pay frequent visits to the east, and several narratives of travels have been preserved. In the year 825, an Irish monk in France, named Dicuil, published a treatise on geography, under the title of *De Mensura Orbis* (Of the Measure of the World), which was still based on Pliny, Solinus, Orosius, Isidore, and Priscian; but Dicuil has inserted in it original information, gathered on the one hand from a traveller who had visited Syria and Egypt a little before the year 767; and on the other hand, from some clerks who had sailed among the northern islands of Scotland, and had even reached Thule or Iceland about the year 795. When king Alfred translated the historical work of Orosius, he

inserted into the prefatory description of the world an account of central and northern Europe as it then existed, and very exact original information relating to the coasts of Scandinavia, which he had obtained orally from two northern navigators, Ohthere and Wulfstan. The royal translator is also said to have sent out messengers to distant India, who returned with many curiosities; and who, if the relation be true, must have delivered to the king an interesting account, the loss of which is in the highest degree to be regretted. I look upon it that there was no impossibility, or even great difficulty, in such a journey in the peculiar state of political relations, when the empire of the Arabs was at its highest point of grandeur. Expeditions like these, we should naturally think, ought to have added to the knowledge previously in existence; yet ages afterwards we still find the popular system founded as before on the older Roman treatises, and even the Roman names preserved at a time when they can only have existed in books. It is impossible now to say how far the teachers in the schools explained orally these ancient denominations and descriptions according to their modern names, and what instruction was there given on the modern state of things.

In the earlier mediæval schools, teaching appears to have been a mere lecture, in a great measure grammatical, on one popular text-book, from which masters and scholars, from generation to generation, ventured rarely, if ever, to depart. The commentary of Bridferth of Ramsey, on the scientific writings of Bede, represents this course as pursued in the monastic school at Ramsey in the tenth century. Bridferth was, however, a man rather in advance of his age, and we find him sometimes appeal-

ing to experiment in his teaching. He was educated in some of those schools on the continent which were then paving the way for a more solid extension of learning and knowledge, which, towards the end of the eleventh century, received a sudden and extraordinary development, in the midst of which arose those remarkable institutions of the middle ages, the universities. The Christian scholars of the west were now no longer satisfied with what was to be derived from their old text-books, or with the ordinary routine of learning which had been so long persevered in; what they could not find at home, they sought in distant lands, and among the Arabs of Spain and of Syria they found not only new elements, but they imbibed new principles of study, and new views as to its objects, which had a powerful effect on the progress of science in future ages. The science of the Greeks, as the empire sank into intellectual imbecility, was received and cherished by the Arabs, and they in their turn, as the empire of the Koran began to totter, handed it over to another race, in whose hands it ultimately led to that grander development which it has taken in modern times.

It was in the midst of that great intellectual blaze which distinguished the twelfth century, that the first decidedly new element was introduced into geographical science in the west. The Arabs, like the barbarian conquerors of Western Europe, had derived their first principles of geographical knowledge from the treatises of the ancients; but they adopted and preserved Ptolemy, and probably some of the other writers who were used by the Gothic "philosophers," and had been exchanged in the west for mere elementary treatises. The Arabs, moreover, who had

applied themselves to all the sciences with extraordinary ardour, were, by the great extent of their conquests, placed in a peculiarly advantageous position for extending and improving their knowledge in geography. They were, thus, far in advance of the Christians of the west; who, from their intercourse with them, derived not only new knowledge, but a new energy in the pursuit of science, and above all, they adopted that practical skill in astronomical observations, which soon dispelled the superstitious ignorance which had previously clogged their steps.

The Anglo-Saxon scholars understood perfectly well that the earth was a globe. They considered it to be the centre of the firmament, which they imagined to be an immense concave surface, on which the stars were in some way or other attached. Two stars, the north polar star and the south polar star, directly opposite to each other, were the axles upon which the firmament turned its endless round. The Anglo-Saxon *Manual of Astronomy*, composed by Alfric, tells us that, "the firmament is always turning round about us, under this earth and above, and there is an incalculable space between it and the earth. Four-and-twenty hours have passed, that is one day and one night, before it is once turned round, and all the stars which are fixed in it turn round with it. The earth stands in the centre, by God's power so fixed, that it never swerves either higher or lower than the almighty creator established it." The notion was, that all the continents and islands known to us as inhabited, belonged to one of five zones, that it was divided from another equally temperate zone inhabited by the antipodes, by a torrid zone, the heat of which rendered it impossible for human beings to pass from one temperate zone to the other. Each

temperate zone was bounded by a frigid zone, the cold of which rendered it equally uninhabitable and inaccessible with the central torrid zone. "Truly," says Alfric, "the sun's intense heat makes five parts in the world, which we call in Latin *quinque zonas*, that is, five girdles. One of the parts is in the centre, raging hot and uninhabitable on account of the sun's nearness, on which no earthly man dwells on account of the insupportable heat. Then there are on two sides of the heat two parts that are temperate, neither too hot nor too cold. On the north part dwell all mankind, under the broad circle which is called *zodiacus*. There are still two parts on two sides, a good deal to the southward and northward of the limits of this circuit, cold and uninhabitable, because the sun never comes to them, but stops on either side at the solstices."

One of the popular Latin writers of this age compares the world to an egg, in which the shell represents the firmament,—with the yolk, our earth, in the middle. There were also more popular views of science; according to some of which it would appear as though the earth, while it was agreed that its shape was globular, was believed to be swimming in the ocean like an orange, the inhabited portion being that part of the surface which emerged from the water, while the sun dived into the ocean each evening, and emerged from it in the morning. An English poem, of a later period (the thirteenth century) assures us that the—

"Urthe is amidde the see a lute (*little*) bal and round."

I have already observed that the geographer of Ravenna appears to have had maps before him when he compiled his book. We have, in fact, at nearly

all times, allusions to the existence of maps. In earlier times these maps were attempts to lay down the positions of countries according to longitudes and latitudes, as in those of Ptolemy, and probably in those used by the Gothic "philosophers," or by itinerary distances, as in the celebrated Peutingerian tables. The maps which belong more especially to the middle ages, are mere attempts of the teacher or scholar to represent pictorially to the eye the supposed facts of the science, combined with his notion of their relative position, and of what he supposed to be the outlines of continents and islands. One of the most ancient maps of the world alluded to by mediæval writers, was that which was possessed by St. Gall, who, in the sixth century, founded the monastery which has ever since been known by his name. Charlemagne is said to have had three tables or plates of silver, on which were represented the world, and the cities of Rome and Constantinople. But silver was a dangerous metal for the preservation of a monument of science; and, some years afterwards, the great emperor's grandson, Lothaire, being in want of money, broke up one of these tables in order to pay his mutinous troops.

One of the earliest—perhaps the earliest—mediæval map we now possess, is a very interesting one preserved in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, in the Cottonian library. It is of a square, or rather oblong square form, and, as it accompanies the text of the *Periegesis* of Priscian, and as it is far more correct in its general disposition than those of a later date, it is probable that it was formed on a much more ancient model. The names are generally ancient, but in the

western and northern parts of Europe and in England, the author has evidently intended to introduce improvements to suit the position of things at the time he wrote. In Armorica, for instance, he has placed the people, whom he calls in Saxon *Suð-brettas*. In England, *Wintonia*, or Winchester—the capital of the Anglo-Saxon kings—stands equally prominent with London, and these are the only two towns named. The cities represented in this map, by their magnitude, as the most eminent in the world, are Babylon, Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Carthage. A small and rude Greek map, accompanying a manuscript of the *Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes, said to be of the ninth century, represents the earth in a similar elongated square form with that given to it in the Anglo-Saxon map.

A belief had arisen among the ecclesiastical geographers, based upon a literal interpretation of the allegorical language of Scripture, that the holy city of Jerusalem occupied the exact centre of the world. A centre rather naturally implied a circular circumference, and this is the form almost universally given to maps of the world from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. The monkish geographers also adopted the belief long before enunciated by the geographer of Ravenna, that Paradise occupied the eastern extremity of Asia, and to hinder any mistake that might arise upon this subject, they take care to figure in that position in their maps, not only the garden and the tree, but Adam and Eve standing beside it. The forms and positions of the different parts of the world are much more distorted than in the Anglo-Saxon map. Five cities now hold pre-eminence—Babylon, Jerusalem, Troy, Rome, and

Carthage. Since the commencement of the crusades, Constantinople and Alexandria had diminished in importance. Babylon, the oldest of cities, and the supposed site of the tower of Babel,—Jerusalem, the holy city, *par excellence*,—Rome, the head of the Catholic world, were objects of universal reverence in the west. Troy had obtained an extraordinary celebrity in the course of the twelfth century, not only from the circumstance of its history having become a popular subject of romance, but because, in the ethnological fables of that age, founded upon Virgil, it was looked upon as the point from whence had sprung the different peoples by whom western Europe was inhabited; and the map-makers seem entirely to have forgotten that the warlike city (as they called it) had long since ceased to exist. It is not so easy to account for the continued celebrity of Carthage.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the maps—which are all of this round form, and follow one or two types, chiefly distinguished by the form given to the Mediterranean sea,—are not uncommon in manuscripts. They are all covered with inscriptions, and with figures of animals and of towns, which make them veritable treatises on geography. A map of the world, in a manuscript of the thirteenth century, in the British Museum, contains a curious note, in which the author refers to four maps which were then looked upon in England as being of chief authority. These were, the map of Robert de Melkeleia, that of the abbey of Waltham, that in the king's chamber at Westminster, and that of Matthew Paris.

The map to which more especially I have now to call attention, is, as far as I can judge from the facsimile, of the earlier half of the thirteenth century,

and is certainly one of the most remarkable monuments of this kind now in existence.

Its history is obscure; it is preserved in Hereford Cathedral, and I understand that it was discovered under the floor of one of the chapels of that edifice. I have not been able to meet with the slightest traces of the person by whose orders it was made, who has caused himself to be represented in one corner as a knight on horseback attended by his page and his greyhound, and who has commemorated himself under the name of Richard of Haldingham and Lafford: on the other side we read the following Anglo-Norman rhymes:—

“Tuz ki cest estorie ont,
Ou oyront, ou luront, ou veront,
Prient à Jhesu en deyté,
De Richard de Haldingham e de Lafford eyt pité,
Ki l'at fet e compassé,
Ke joie en cel li seit doné.”

This large map is founded on the popular cosmographical treatises of the time, which generally commence with stating that Augustus Cæsar sent out three philosophers to measure and survey the three divisions of the world, and that all geographical knowledge was the result of their observations. The ground-work of this fable is found in the too literal interpretation of a passage of the Gospel of St. Luke: in the map before us, the philosophers are named Nichodoxus, Theodotus, and Policlitus; and the emperor is delivering to them their written orders, confirmed by a very handsome mediæval seal. The world is here represented as round, surrounded by the ocean. At the top of the map, which represents the east, we see Paradise, with the tree, and the

figures of our first parents. Above is a large group representing the day of judgment, with the Virgin Mary interceding for those who have been faithful to her worship. The map is chiefly filled with long inscriptions, comprising passages taken from Solinus, Isidore, &c., with figures of towns, and with drawings of the monstrous animals and peoples with which the mediæval cosmographers peopled distant parts of the world. Many of the figures on this map manifest a remarkable degree of simplicity on the part of the author; such, for example, as the figure of Lot's wife changed into a statue of salt; the labyrinth of Crete; the columns of Hercules; and the singular representations of Scylla and Charybdis. The four great cities are made especially prominent: Jerusalem is very distinctly figured as the centre of the world; Babylon has its famous tower: Rome, the capital of the world, bears the inscription,—

Roma caput mundi tenet orbis frena rotundi;

and Troy is described as *Troja civitas bellicosissima*.

It will be seen at once that nearly the whole of this remarkable map is founded upon the more common and older element of mediæval geographical science,—that derived from the popular Roman writers. It was some time before much of the other two elements—the knowledge derived from the Arabians, and the result of mediæval voyages of discovery,—found its way into monuments of this description. The only particulars I have observed in the map which appear to be derived from the Arabs, are the *mekesus civitas* on the confines of Egypt and Arabia, which is perhaps Mecca, and Samarcand, which is here mentioned. On the western coast of

Africa, the Canary Islands are indicated, which our geographer follows Pliny in supposing were inhabited by large dogs (*canes*), from which he derives the name.

When we turn our eyes to the eastern part of the Hereford map, we cannot help being struck with the confused form given to the whole of Asia. This might certainly have been corrected by the knowledge which must then have been derived from the frequent communications with the Arabs. As that knowledge increased, the limits of this part of the world were gradually carried further and further, until at length its figure was traced more correctly; but it was long before people were disabused of the idea that Paradise occupied, as it does in our map, the extremity of the eastern continent. Perhaps many an adventurous monk wandered over the intervening lands in the hope of reaching this final object of his worldly pilgrimage, who might have told an interesting story of his adventures. They related in the monasteries of the east an old legend of a holy man who traversed Central Asia to the very precincts of Paradise, which he was not allowed to enter; and they told how he met with pious hermits in the solitudes of the intervening countries. If we read the travels of the Arabian Ebn Batuta, we shall find that he also saw hermits in the interior of Asia, but they were the religious fanatics of India, and not Christians. This coincidence, however, would lead us to believe that there was some foundation for the monkish legend to which I have alluded.

The great eagerness in the west for information relating to the interior of Asia was first roused by the fearful intelligence of the devastating irruption of the Tartars into Europe under Ghengis Khan, at

the beginning of the thirteenth century. The dismay which this intelligence caused, even in England, can now with difficulty be imagined; and there were many who supposed that it was the bursting forth of the hordes of Gog and Magog, the precursors of the end of the world. Others took them for a race of demons. In this uncertainty, several monks were successively sent on pretended embassies to Ghengis Khan, but really with the object of gaining information as to the character of the people who followed his standard, and as to the countries from which they came. Some of these missionaries were carried into the interior of Asia as far as Thibet and the borders of China, and obtained information which tended materially to alter the previously-existing geographical notions relating to that part of the world. The relations published by two of these ambassadors, Jean du Plan de Carpin and Guillaume de Rubruquis, both Frenchmen, are full of the most interesting details, and will bear a comparison with the works of travellers of a much later date.

The free cities of Italy had now begun to show their pre-eminence in navigation, and displayed an extraordinary spirit of commercial enterprise. In the midst of the terrors excited by the conquests of the Tartars, Italian merchants were venturing even into the countries they were ravaging to seek a mart for their wares. It was with this view that the well-known Marco Polo of Venice, whose father and uncle had twenty years before travelled as far as Bokhara, accompanied them in 1271 into the interior of Asia, and succeeded in reaching China, where they gained the favour of the emperor and remained seventeen years. They returned slowly by way of Persia, and at last reached

Venice in safety after an absence of twenty-four years. By the relation afterwards published by Marco Polo, the mystery which had so long enveloped the geography of Asia was entirely dispelled. Their success produced a number of imitators, and many attempts were made to reach the interior of Asia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the most remarkable of these travellers was our countryman, sir John Maundeville, who, however, evidently never visited one quarter of the localities he describes, and who has disfigured his narrative with a number of marvellous stories, totally unworthy of credit, either exaggerated misrepresentations of what he had learnt from hearsay, or a mere repetition of the old fables of Solinus and Isidore, which ought now to have been expunged from the maps.

There is one passage in the relation of sir John Maundeville which deserves our notice, as proving that the form of the earth was still, in the fourteenth century, a matter of discussion.

In the seventeenth chapter of his *Voiage and Travaile*, Maundeville speaks of the “evylle customs used in the yle of Lamary,” and adds:—

“In that lond, ne in many othere beyonde that, no man may see the sterre transmontane, that is clept the sterre of the see, that is unmevable, and that is toward the northe, that we clepen the lode sterre. But men seen another sterre, the contrarie to him, that is toward the southe, that is clept antartyk. And right as the schipmen taken here avys here and governe hem be the lode sterre, right so don schipmen beyonde tho parties be the sterre of the southe, the whiche sterre apperethe not to us. And this sterre that is toward the northe, that wee clepen the

lode sterre, ne apperethe not to hem. For whiche cause, men may wel perceyve that the lond and the see ben of rownde schapp and forme. For the partie of the firmament schewethe in o contree, that schewethe not in another contree. And men may well preven be experience and sotyle compassement of wytt, that gif a man fond passages be schippes, that wolde go to serchen the world, men myghte go be schippe alle aboute the world, and aboven and benethen."

After giving, in support of his views, a series of astronomical observations he professes to have made with the astrolabe in different countries through which he had passed, Maundeville continues:—

"And also I have seen the 3 parties of alle the roundnesse of the firmament, and more yit 5 degrees and an half. Be the whiche I seye you certeynly, that men may envirowne alle the erthe of alle the world, as wel undre as aboven, and turnen agen to his contree, that hadde companye and schippyng and conduyt; and alle weyes he scholde fynde men, londes, and yles, als wel as in this contree. For yee wyten welle, that thei that ben toward the antartyk, thei ben streghte feet agen feet of hem that dwellen undre the transmontane; als wel as wee and thei that dwellyn under us, ben feet agenst feet. For alle the parties of see and of lond han here appositees, habitables or trepassables, and thei of this half and beyond half."

And in further confirmation, he repeats the following curious story, which is peculiarly interesting, as showing the popular notions which were then gradually spreading themselves abroad:—

"And therefore hathe it befallen many tymes of o

thing that I have herd cownted, whan I was yong, how a worthi man departed somtyme from oure contrees for to go serche the world. And so he passed Ynde, and the yles beyonde Ynde, where ben mo than 5000 yles: and so longe he wente be see and lond, and so enviound the world be many seysons, that he fond an yle, where he herde speke his owne langage, callynge on oxen in the plowghe suche wordes as men speken to bestes in his owne contree; whereof he hadde gret mervayle, for he knewe not how it myghte be. But I seye, that he had gon so longe, be londe and be see, that he had envyround alle the erthe, that he was comen agen envirounynge, that is to seye, goynge aboute, unto his owne marches, gif he wolde have passed forthe, til he had founden his contree and his owne knouliche. But he turned agen from thens, from whens he was come fro; and so he loste moche peynefulle labour, as him self seyde, a gret while aftre, that he was comen hom. For it befelle aftre that he wente into Norweye; and there tempest of the see toke him; and he arryved in an yle; and whan he was in that yle, he knew wel that it was the yle where he had herd speke his owne langage before, and the callynge of the oxen at the plowghe: and that was possible thinge."

The discoveries in the east, as we have seen, took first a surpassing importance from accidental circumstances. Multitudes of minor discoveries, known only within a small circle of persons, or committed to a single manuscript which was forgotten till it perished, never found a permanent place in science. It was only after the invention of printing, when copies of books were so easily multiplied, that facts once obtained became available to every scholar, and

thus contributed with certainty to the general advance of knowledge. In the course of our researches into mediæval documents, we are continually making the discovery that some of what are looked upon, with least hesitation, as the inventions of modern science were known to the scholars at that period, when science flourished in so extraordinary a manner in the mediæval universities.

Of these, one of the most remarkable instances is the mariner's compass, which is now known to have been in common use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries among the English and French navigators, although, it is true, in rather a rude form. Two poems of the thirteenth century give very curious descriptions of the compass as then used. The *Bible Guiot de Provins*, a satire on the vices of the age, wishes that the pope were as safe a guide to Christians as the polar star is to mariners, and adds:—

“ Un art font qui mentir ne puet
Par la vertu de la maniete :
Une pierre laide et brunete,
Où li fers volentiers se joint,
Ont ; si esgardent le droit point,
Puis c'une aguile i ont touchié,
Et en un festu l'ont couchié,
En l'eve le metent sanz plus,
Et li festuz la tient desus ;
Puis se torne la pointe toute
Contre l'estoile si sanz doute,
Que jà nul hom n'en douterà,
Ne jà por rien ne fausera.
Quant la mers est obscure et brune,
C'on ne voit estoile ne lune,
Dont font à l'aguille alumer,
Puis n'ont il garde d'esgarer :
Contre l'estoile va la pointe,
Por ce sont li marinier cointe
De la droite voie tenir.
C'est une ars qui ne puet faillir.”

“ They make a contrivance which cannot lie
By the virtue of the magnet :
An ugly and brownish stone,
To which iron spontaneously joins itself,
They have ; and they observe where it points,
After they have caused a needle to touch it,
And placed this in a rush, [more.
They put it in the water without anything
And the rush keeps it on the surface ;
Then its point turns direct
Towards the star with such certainty,
That no man will ever have any doubt of it,
Nor will it ever for anything go false.
When the sea is dark and hazy,
That they can neither see star nor moon,
Then they place a light by the needle,
After which they have no fear of going
Towards the star goes the point, [wrong :
Whereby the mariners have the skill
To keep the right way.
It is an art which cannot fail.”

In a love song, of nearly the same date, the lover compares his mistress to the polar star, to which he, the magnet, ever points ; and describes in a similar manner how the voyagers by sea construct the com-

pass by which they discover the position of the polar star in dark or cloudy weather :—

“Li marinier qui vont en Frise,
En Gresse, en Acre, ou en Venisse,
Sevent par li toute la voie.”

Similar descriptions of the use of the magnetic needle are found in the writings of Brunetto Latini, the preceptor of the poet Dante, which represent the invention, it is true, in a very primitive form; but since the above was written, I have discovered in an earlier writer, Alexander Neckam, descriptions of the mariner's compass much more definite, and making us acquainted with the instrument in a more perfect form. The first of these descriptions is contained in the work of this author entitled *De Utensilibus*, compiled probably before the year 1187, and intended as a vocabulary of Latin words, by describing the various objects on which they were employed. In speaking of the things necessary on shipboard, Neckam says, the ship must also have a “needle placed on a pivot, which will turn about until the point is directed towards the north, and thus the navigators will know how to direct their course when the polar star is concealed by the state of the atmosphere, though this star never disappears under the horizon on account of the smallness of the circle it describes.”* In another work by the same author, his treatise *De Naturis*

* Qui ergo munitam vult habere navem habeat etiam acum jaculo superpositam; rotabitur enim et circumvolvitur donec cuspis acus respiciat septentrionem, sicque comprehendent quo tendere debeant nautæ cum cynosura latet in aëris turbatione, quamvis ea occasum nunquam teneat propter circuli brevitatem.

Rerum, the mariner's compass is again described in the following terms :—"The navigators who pass the seas, when the light of the sun is concealed by clouds, or when the world is involved in the shades of night, and they know not to what point of the horizon their ship points, consult the needle or magnet, which moves about in a circle, until, when it becomes motionless, its point is directed towards the north."* I have printed these curious notices in the "Volume of Vocabularies," published at the expense of Mr. Mayer, of Liverpool; but I give them in the notes below with the very ingenious emendations of the distinguished geographer, my friend Monsieur D'Avezac, the president of the Geographical Society of Paris, which he has suggested in a memoir in the transactions of that society. If M. D'Avezac's readings should not prove to be exactly those of Alexander Neckam's original text, I am satisfied that they give the exact sense of passages which were rather obscure in the text furnished by the manuscript. It is quite evident from them that the mariner's compass, as now used, was well known in the twelfth century, and M. D'Avezac has shown good reasons for believing that all that was done by Flavio Gioia, the reputed inventor of the mariner's compass in the fifteenth century, was to place the needle and its pivot in a closed box, named in Italian *bossolo*, or *bussolo*, because it was made of box-wood (*bosso*), and hence the

* Nautæ etiam mare legentes, cum beneficium claritatis solis in tempore nubilo non sentiunt, aut etiam cum caligine nocturnarum tenebrarum mundus obvolvitur, et ignorant in quem mundi cardinem prora tendat, acum sive magnetem inspiciunt, quæ circulariter circumvolvitur usque dum, ejus motu cessante, cuspis ipsius septentrionalem plagam respiciat.

Italian name *bussolo*, and the French *boussole*, were eventually given to the whole instrument.

With the certainty that the mariner's compass was known to the mediæval navigators, we have no difficulty in comprehending how they often ventured upon distant voyages, and even at times boldly threw themselves out upon the ocean in search of adventures and discoveries. But here, deeply implanted superstitions and prejudices of a variety of kinds came to place a bar to further discoveries, until they were broken down by some lucky accident, or by the superior intelligence of some extraordinary individual. The ancients supposed that the sea to the north of Britain was not navigable, on account of the rigour of the climate, which, as they imagined, rendered the water thick and stiff. The Arabs had precisely the same notion with respect to the sea of the torrid zone, the moisture of which they believed was so much sucked by the heat of the sun, that the water was thickened so as to be impassable by ships. This belief for a long time presented an insurmountable check to the progress of discovery along the coast of Africa, until it was contradicted by the accidental experience of ships which were carried by stress of weather beyond the supposed limit, or by the boldness of individual enterprise. It is probable that many adventurers, who have left no memorial of their actions, led the way to the more important discoveries of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century.

If we turn our eyes towards the west, we shall see that the middle ages have also left us a considerable number of mysterious traditions of voyages, which would seem to indicate attempts at least to explore the ocean in the direction of America. The Arabian

navigators of Portugal are said to have sailed across the Atlantic in the middle of the twelfth century. The most remarkable of the Christian traditions on this subject is the marvellous legend of St. Brandan, who, after wandering on the western seas for seven years, is said at length to have reached Paradise. Indeed, during the middle ages, all those who were initiated in science knew well that the earth was a sphere; and the idea of going to Paradise by sea, instead of going thither by land, must have struck many persons. We are even told that the sailors of Columbus, as they approached the coasts of America, imagined for a time that they had reached the precincts of the terrestrial Paradise. But the barrier raised by superstition against proceeding in this direction, was stronger even than that which limited the progress of the ancient navigators to the south. It was easy to talk of science and theory, but when it was the moment to put this into practice, popular credulity often gained the mastery over science which was still uncertain; and in the particular instance now alluded to, every one was more or less awed by the mysterious fear, that if they advanced in that direction in search of Paradise, it was not impossible that midway they might fall into hell!—for they were not sure that at a certain distance in the west there was not a gulf in the sea which conducted to the infernal regions. In an early Anglo-Saxon tract, intended to convey abstruse information in the form of dialogue, but filled with the popular legends of the age, to the question, “Tell me why is the sun so red in the evening?” the answer is, “Because it looketh down upon hell.”

Moreover, although it was generally understood

that the earth was spherical, there were various popular notions as to the manner in which it was suspended, and to the form and position of the ocean. Some seemed to think that it was like an egg in an egg-cup, the upper portion of which was alone exposed; others thought, as I have already stated, that it was like an orange swimming in the sea. Some, unacquainted with the nature of gravitation, supposed that after you had passed a certain limit, you were in danger of dropping off from the earth's surface. However, as early as the fourteenth century, such errors appear to have been gradually disappearing; and stories and conjectures, like those which I have quoted from Sir John Maundeville, were the real precursors of the discovery of America.





XIV.

ON THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.



THINK few will deny that our attention could hardly be called to a more interesting or more important subject than that of the language we speak. Language is in a manner the index of our existence, it is intimately connected with all our domestic relations as well as with our relations to other peoples, and the history of our own language is specially to us that of ourselves as a race of mankind. We have reason, therefore, to be surprised that it is a subject with which people in general are little acquainted, and that it has hitherto been taught so imperfectly and so incorrectly in our ordinary course of education; and this I am sure will be accepted as my excuse for taking it for my subject on the present occasion.

Some fifteen centuries ago, a great portion of Europe was absorbed in the vast empire of Rome, which included this island, with the exception of the wild districts of the extreme north, and which on the continent had a varying frontier extending from the Rhine to the Danube. With few exceptions, such as those of the Armoricans and the Aquitanians (re-

presented by the modern population of Britany and the Basque countries) and that of Greece, Rome had imposed her own language upon the conquered provinces, and at the time of which I am speaking, the population of as much of western Europe as formed part of the empire, spoke generally the Latin tongue. I believe that this was strictly the case with the Roman province of Britain, and that nearly four hundred years of uninterrupted occupation, with a current of recruits of all sorts to the colonists, perhaps in proportion more continual even than that in modern times of the United States of America, had entirely effaced the primitive character of its population. The Celtic race, driven everywhere before the civilization of Rome or the hostility of the Teutons, had found its last refuge to the West in Ireland, and I am inclined to think that we must look to the Irish language as the real representative of the Celtic dialects which were spoken in Britain before its occupation by the Romans. It appears to me most probable that the population of the North of Scotland was Teutonic—German or Scandinavian. On the Continent, the vast sweep of territory to the north of the Roman frontier, in nearly its whole extent, was occupied by the great Teutonic race, in its various divisions of High German, in which the Goths were included, Low German, occupying the countries in the west up to the Danish peninsula, and Scandinavian, which included the Danes and the Swedes, the Norwegians, and North-western islanders—in fact, the Northmen.

It is no part of my plan to enter further into the divisions of the Teutonic race on the Continent, or into their relations with the empire. You all know

that the Teutons eventually overrun and conquered the Roman provinces, and that three distinct tribes of the Low Germans,—the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes,—made themselves masters of Britain. The establishment of the Teutons in the Roman provinces brought with it a change of language, as well as of manners and political feelings, on one part or the other, according to a variety of circumstances into which I will not now enter. On the Continent, over nearly the whole extent of the western empire, the modern languages are derived from the Latin, and were known during the whole period of the middle ages by the name of Roman. In England the Teutonic language completely superseded the Latin, for several causes, of which one was no doubt the circumstance, that for a long period previous to the final breaking up of the western empire, the population of Britain had been continually and largely increased by the immigration of German settlers, so that the German spirit was far more powerful than the Roman.

The notion will naturally suggest itself to you, that, as three different Teutonic peoples conquered the island of Britain, they must have imported into it three languages instead of one. This notion, however, is only correct in a certain sense; for the languages talked by the different German tribes, or states, had not at that time so far diverged in form as to hinder them from easily intermixing and coalescing. The different branches of the Low Germans could not only understand one another with perfect ease, but they could probably intercommunicate with their next neighbours, either of the High German tongue or of the Scandinavian, with at least as little

difficulty as at the present day a Lancashire peasant would discourse with a Yorkshireman. In fact, what are now distinct languages were then represented only by cognate dialects. There can be no doubt that there was a strong difference of dialect, from the earliest period of their settlement in this island, between the languages spoken by the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, and these divisions were the foundations of the great classes of the modern dialects of England. The Jutes, represented chiefly by the kingdom of Kent, were the least numerous of the three Teutonic peoples of Britain, and although, probably from their position, they had at an early period attained to a great degree of commercial prosperity, riches, and power, they exercised no permanent influence, either political or much less literary, on the great Anglo-Saxon confederacy. It was the Angles, who were numerically by far the most powerful of the Teutonic settlers, who first took the lead in intelligence and in literature. The earliest literary productions of the Anglo-Saxons, and the oldest Anglo-Saxon traditions known, appear to belong chiefly to the family of the Angles, and their influence over the rest was so great, that not only did these accept from them the general title of *Englisc*, but even the nations of the continent who had preserved the Roman language, generally agreed in giving to the Teutonic population of Britain the name of *Angli*. Thus we derive from this one branch of the triple composition of our race the national name of which we are proud, that of Englishmen, and it is from them that our language was called ENGLISH. Nevertheless, the Anglian division of the race fell in the course of the eighth century under the superior influence of

the Saxons, and Wessex, or the kingdom of the West-Saxons, not only gave us finally our line of kings, but furnished us with the model of our language and literature. The written English language of the present day is founded upon that dialect in which king Alfred wrote, and which held in Saxon England somewhat the same position as the Attic dialect in ancient Greece. With this change in the predominance of race, the term *Saxon* came into more frequent use to designate the Teutonic population of this island, and, as there continued to be Saxons on the Continent as well as in England, it has become the practice to call our own ancestors, by way of distinction, and not as indicating an amalgamation of race, the ANGLO-SAXONS, that is, the Saxons of England. Yet so permanent are early ethnological principles, that though the Saxon dynasty, the Saxon dialect, and the Saxon laws, became those of the whole Anglo-Saxon people, the older and particular designation has outlived all changes in the names we now possess of Englishmen, the English language, and England.

The Anglo-Saxon language—under which appellation we now include the language of the Teutonic settlers in Britain in its three great divisions—was one hardly less complicated in its grammatical forms and inflections, when first introduced into this island, than that of ancient Greece. But, at the earliest period at which we know it, the Anglo-Saxon language was already undergoing a degradation from its primitive forms and all the other changes to which languages in general are subject. At the end of the Saxon period much of the language had already become obsolete. In the first place, it was very

copious in words, and one word to express a particular idea was continually going out of fashion to give place to another. In the second place, a very important portion of the language in the earlier stage of its history, that of poetry, had become obsolete in the mass. The language of poetry in Anglo-Saxon was originally distinguished, not only by its peculiar phraseology, but by the use of a class of words which were rarely met with in the ordinary language of life, and which evidently belonged to the minstrel class, and to what we may call the heroic age. The writers of poetry at a later period seem to have lost the command of this language, and their verses, though still possessing the metrical forms, had become in other respects, of course with some exceptions, remarkably prosaic. I doubt whether people in general, at the close of the Anglo-Saxon period, understood the older language of poetry, and very few of its words were carried forward into semi-Saxon or preserved in later English.

I am one of those who do not believe in the existence of a Celtic element in the English language.*

* It must not be forgotten that the Teutonic and Celtic languages are, after all, only two branches from the same original stock, and we very naturally expect to find a great number of roots common to both, and similar forms of words presenting themselves with similar meanings, without any reason for supposing that the one language borrowed them from the other. Moreover, I am perfectly satisfied that the Welsh language, as we know it, contains a considerable number of words which have been taken directly, not only from Anglo-Saxon, or English, but from Anglo-Norman also, and the former perhaps, only came into the Welsh language since the Norman Conquest. These two circumstances seem to me quite sufficient to account for the verbal coincidences pointed out in a paper by the Rev. J. Davies, recently published by the Philo-

I have no doubt that the Anglo-Saxons found in this island a people talking Latin, and if any portion of the population really continued to use the Celtic tongue, it must have been a small and unimportant class, who are not likely to have exercised any influence on the language of the new conquerors. The evidences of this are numerous, and, to me at least, very satisfactory, but they do not form a part of our subject upon which I can dwell at present. The German race had a term for those who were of a different race from themselves, which was represented in Anglo-Saxon by the noun *wealh*, a foreigner, and by the adjective *wælic* or *wylisc*, foreign, but which, as the Romans were the only race quite different from their own with which they had much acquaintance, they applied especially and almost solely to people speaking the Latin tongue. During the middle ages, the term Welsh, in the German languages of the Continent, meant especially French, but was applied also to other neo-Latin dialects; in German of the present day the same word (*wälsch*) is applied peculiarly to the language and people of Italy. It was no doubt for the same reason, namely, that they were a people speaking Latin, that the Anglo-Saxons applied this word to the population they found in Britain, and it probably became extended to what we now call Wales and the Welsh,

logical Society, as far as those coincidences are real. We are not unacquainted with the history of the Anglo-Saxons in this country, and I believe that that history is quite contrary to the notion that at the time of the Norman Conquest there was any such mixture of the Celtic race with the Teutonic population as could have exercised any influence either on the language or on the character of the people.

merely because, when they subsequently became acquainted with them, the Anglo-Saxons confounded the inhabitants of that district with the other old inhabitants of South Britain. You must bear in mind, in considering this question, that our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language is after all imperfect, for our nomenclature is made up from written documents of a partial description, and there no doubt existed a great number of words in the Anglo-Saxon language which are now entirely lost. No doubt many words now found in the English language, and especially in the provincial dialects, of which the origin is now unknown, had their originals in pure Anglo-Saxon.

If I object to the notion of a Celtic element in our language, I object no less to that of a mixture with any other Teutonic dialect. Our older philologists believed in a modification of the Anglo-Saxon during a certain period which they termed Dano-Saxon, supposing that they traced in it the marks of Danish influence; but this theory has been entirely abandoned by the best of our modern scholars, and there certainly are no proofs that such an influence ever existed.* The language which our forefathers spoke in the middle of the eleventh century was the same Low German dialect which they had brought with them into the island, with the mere changes which any language would undergo in itself during the

* Of course I do not deny that our local dialects, in the parts occupied by them, may have derived some words from the Danes, but the pure Anglo-Saxon language was certainly not influenced by them. It has been the fashion of late years to ascribe much more to the Danes than I believe them to have any claim to. This, however, is a question the discussion of which would take us too far away from the present subject.

transmission, under the same circumstances, through several centuries.

At the period just mentioned, a great political event, the Norman conquest, brought into our island a new language, one of those which had grown out of the language of the Roman empire, French, as it was then talked and written in Normandy; and Anglo-Norman, as this neo-Latin dialect is usually termed, continued during two centuries from that time to be exclusively the language of the aristocracy of England. There were thus two entirely distinct languages, bearing no resemblance to each other, co-existent in different classes of the same nation, for we must not suppose that, for a moment, the Anglo-Saxon, or, as we must henceforward call it, the English tongue, was abandoned or fell into disuse. It was long, indeed, an uncontradicted statement of our historians, that William the Conqueror made a deliberate attempt to suppress the use of the Anglo-Saxon tongue in his new kingdom, and Ingulph, or rather probably the pretender who assumed his name, asserts that it was banished from schools, and that the French or Anglo-Norman was used in its place in teaching children the rudiments of Latin grammar. The former of these statements no longer receives any credit, and the latter is disproved by an abundance of positive evidence. We cannot, indeed, doubt that the Anglo-Saxon grammar of the Latin language by Alfric continued to be used in the English schools until late in the twelfth century. Hicks, the Anglo-Saxon scholar, had in his possession a manuscript of Alfric's grammar, with an interlinear gloss of some of the Saxon words in Anglo-Norman, and from the examples he gives we may probably

ascribe them to the first half of the twelfth century. This would seem to show that even a foreigner, employed as a teacher in England, had to use the Anglo-Saxon Latin grammar in his school, although his own knowledge of Anglo-Saxon was so imperfect that he was obliged to add a translation of the Anglo-Saxon words into Anglo-Norman for his own use. Further than this, Sir Thomas Phillipps found among the archives of Worcester cathedral some leaves of a copy of Alfric's grammar, written in the degraded form of the Anglo-Saxon language which prevailed in the middle and latter half of the twelfth century. The Anglo-Saxon language had, indeed, at this time undergone considerable degradation from the form it presented in the eleventh century. It was rapidly losing its grammatical inflections, and in its words broad sounds were exchanged for softer and quicker ones. Thus the final *a* was constantly exchanged for *e*, and the prefix *ge* was everywhere turned into *y* or *i*. For *cempa*, a champion, they said *kempe*; for *gemetung*, a meeting, they said *imeting*; and for *gerefa*, a prefect, they would say *ireve*. With this change, however, there was no considerable introduction of Norman words. It was pure Anglo-Saxon as to the substance, but degraded in its forms. Philologists have given to the language in this state of transition the name of semi-Saxon. We can trace its progress in several literary monuments of importance. The latter years of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was continued to 1145, exhibit the language as already breaking very fast; in the metrical chronicle of Layamon, and in the metrical harmony of the gospels called the Ormulum, which were both probably written in the closing years of the twelfth century, the Anglo-Saxon

grammatical forms have undergone an entire change, which is still more complete in the semi-Saxon text of the *Regulæ Inclusarum*, or rule of nuns, in the earlier half of the thirteenth century. It is evident from the character of these, and other literary remains of less importance, that the use of the English language, during the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries, was by no means confined to the lower classes of society, but it prevailed generally among the middle and educated classes, and among the clergy and in the monastic houses, at least in those devoted to females.

It was in the middle of the thirteenth century, when the national spirit of the English people showed itself in the great popular struggle under Simon de Montfort, that the English language, which had now emerged from that transition state under which it has been known as semi-Saxon, at length asserted what we may call its political rights, and reappeared in the court. The political songs, and other writings, composed during the civil strife known as the barons' wars, show us not only two, but three languages, co-existing in this country at the same time. These were, the English, the Anglo-Norman, (or, as it was usually called at the time, the French,) and the Latin, of which we need not take the latter into consideration, as it belonged almost exclusively to the clergy.

The long continued existence of what we call the Anglo-Norman language in this country was not a mere accident, but it was a consequence of the political condition of Europe. The feudal aristocracy was united throughout the whole extent of feudalism, by a community of interests as well as feelings, to

such a degree, that the nobles of one country felt a closer relationship with those of another than with the unaristocratic classes of their own countries, or even with their own sovereign. This was so much the case that, until the spirit of feudal society began to decline, it was no uncommon thing for a baron to hold fiefs in the dominions of several different sovereigns, and to form his alliances sometimes with the barons of one of these countries, and sometimes with those of another. A common language was, therefore, a necessary element in the system; and as feudalism had originated in France, and took its greatest development there, French became its universal language. It was, then, not only as the language of the Normans, but as that peculiarly of the feudal aristocracy in general, that French was introduced into England under William the Conqueror, and it was in that character that it continued to be the language of the aristocracy of England until feudalism itself was broken down. It had ceased, however, to be their exclusive language in the thirteenth century. In the latter years of that century, a tract or treatise was written in French or Anglo-Norman verse, forming a sort of vocabulary of that language, and designed expressly for the purpose of teaching it to children. The number of copies of this tract still preserved in MS. show that it was a popular elementary book, and that it was in extensive use. The compiler was Walter de Bibblesworth, a man known elsewhere as a writer of French verse and apparently belonging himself to the aristocratic class; he was a friend of the great statesman of the reign of Edward I, Henry de Lacy earl of Lincoln and Salisbury, and compiled the treatise we are speaking of at the request of the lady Dionysia

de Monchensey. Thus all the relations of the author and of his book were of an aristocratic character. Now Walter de Bibblesworth states his object to be to instruct the rising generation in the proper use of the words of the French language, and especially in the correct application of the genders, and the French words are explained in English, implying thus that the learner was acquainted with the English language before he began to learn French. We thus ascertain the very important fact that, before the end of the thirteenth century, the children of the aristocracy of England learned English before they were instructed in any other language, or, in other words, that English had become their mother tongue.*

Although, therefore, French was no doubt still looked upon as the peculiar language of the aristocracy, a new modification had taken place in the mutual position of the two languages, for, instead of their mere co-existence in the same country, but in two different classes or great divisions of society, we have them now co-existent in the same class. This change marked what may be considered as the birth of modern English literature. The English language now began among the aristocracy and at court to be adopted as that of our national poetry and prose, and to step into the place which had been usurped almost

* This very curious monument of the educational system of the middle ages is printed in a volume of mediæval vocabularies, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and English, recently published at the expense of Mr. Joseph Mayer, of Liverpool, to whom not only the Historic Society, but the science of Archæology in general, is under so many obligations. These vocabularies are extremely valuable, as illustrating not only the history of our language, but the manners and condition of our forefathers.

exclusively by the French or Anglo-Norman language during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. With it, also, began the intermingling of the two languages, in consequence of which a large portion of the Anglo-Saxon language gradually became obsolete.

It is necessary, however, that this process of intermingling and becoming obsolete should itself be explained, for we should form a very erroneous opinion if we supposed, as some who have treated on the subject seem to suppose, that there was any design or plan in the mixture. You will easily conceive how people talking equally among themselves two different languages would be continually tempted to use, in one language, a word or words taken from the other, either because it was a favourite word with them, or, more usually, because it presented a more familiar picture of the object it was used to designate. Much more would this interchange of words take place, in the intercommunication between the class which used both languages and that which used nothing but English in regard of a number of words from the French language which custom had begun to affix to certain objects. Thus, we know well that the Anglo-Saxon table was formed merely by placing a board upon trestles at the time of eating, and that it was designated simply by the name of *a board*. Permanent tables were probably known to the Saxon portion of our population only through the Normans, and as the former constantly heard them spoken of by this French name of *table*, they would naturally learn the word themselves, and, if they did not use it at first indiscriminately for the old description of table as well as the new one, it would become so completely iden-

tified with the latter, that we are not surprised at the older English word being lost as the old practice was discontinued. In fact the Saxon word for a table can hardly be said to belong to the English language at the present day, yet, though we should be surprised at hearing anybody call a table a board, we still use the word in certain phrases derived from ancient customs, and we speak of a "festive board," and talk of giving people "board and lodging," and of sitting at a council or committee board. Again, we know that an Anglo-Norman would call a sheep a *mutton*, while an Englishman of the Saxon race would call it a *sheep*. Now we know that in feudal times nearly the whole of the animal provisions of the estate was swept off into the castle or mansion of the landlord, where it was consumed in extravagant hospitality or salted down to keep in store for occasions when fresh meat could not be procured. There can be little doubt, from what we know of the condition of the people in the feudal ages, that the agricultural population, who among themselves knew the various animals alive by their Anglo-Saxon names, rarely tasted their flesh except when they sat in the halls or kitchens of their landlords, where they would hear it spoken of, and must ask for it, only by its Anglo-Norman name. Hence they would gradually become accustomed to call the animal a *sheep*, and the flesh of it, when dead, *mutton*. Thus we see how our language has become enriched by adopting in some cases the originally synonymous words of the two languages, and giving them a somewhat different meaning. All the usual articles of animal food have fallen under the circumstances of the example just given. We speak of beef, mutton, veal, pork, by their Anglo-Norman names,

while we continue to call the living animals by their Anglo-Saxon names of oxen, sheep, calves, and swine. Words connected with cooking have been similarly exchanged. Thus, the Anglo-Saxon word *brædan* or *bredan*, to roast, has disappeared from our language, and the word we have adopted in its place is derived from the Anglo-Norman *rostir*, the modern French *rôtir*. Roasting was in the middle ages practised chiefly with regard to fowls and smaller animals, while substantial meat was much more commonly boiled, perhaps partly from the circumstance that so great a portion of it was salted. Hence the Anglo-Saxon word *seothan*, to boil, held its position in the language much longer than *brædan*; and its representative, to *seethe*, can hardly yet be said to have become obsolete. Nevertheless, it has virtually been long displaced by the Anglo-Norman word, to *boil*. Similarly the Anglo-Saxon word, *hyrstan*, to fry, has been superseded by the Anglo-Norman equivalent. The adoption of Anglo-Norman words in cookery may be explained by the same causes which influenced the change of the names of meats. The artizan and the manufacturer, on the other hand, have generally preserved the Anglo-Saxon names connected with their occupations, although we find these exchanged sometimes for Anglo-Norman, under circumstances of which it would not be easy to give an explanation. Thus we learn from the vocabularies that the Anglo-Saxon name for a carpenter's plane was *locer*, which appears to have become obsolete early in the Anglo-Norman period, for we have long known no other than the Anglo-Norman name. Indeed, it would be most dangerous to attempt to form any general rule upon such examples as these, for, whatever rule it

might be, when we attempt to apply it we should find nothing but exceptions. Thus, from the strictness with which game was preserved by the feudal barons, we might suppose that the different animals which came under that designation would have received Anglo-Norman names, yet the names the animals of the chase still bear in our language, such as a deer, a hart, a roe, a hare, are all Anglo-Saxon, while, singularly enough, among the birds which come under the head of game the partridge has lost its Anglo-Saxon names of *ærschenn* or *rephung*, the pheasant perhaps that of *wor-hana*,* and the heron that of *hragra*, in order to take their present names which are purely Anglo-Norman. As war was so peculiarly the business of the feudal aristocracy, we might suppose that at all events the names for arms would be Anglo-Norman, yet we find that this is not the case, for we speak of a *sword* and not of an *épée*, of *bows* and *arrows* instead of *arcs* and *fletches*, and we even usually call the *lance*, the distinctive arm of the knight, by its Anglo-Saxon name of a *spear*. What is still more remarkable, our language has preserved the Anglo-Saxon word *knight* to distinguish the feudal warrior himself, instead of his Anglo-Norman name of *chevalier*. In the derivative from

* It has been said, I know not on what authority, that the pheasant is a comparatively modern importation into our island. I can only say that it was certainly commonly known here in the twelfth century, and I am not aware of any reason for supposing that it was then a novelty. In the treatises on cookery and the service of the table, compiled in the fourteenth century, we have directions for dressing and serving it, as well as for catching it in the books on Venerie. The early Anglo-Saxon vocabularies interpret the Latin *phasianus* by *wor-hana*, which has been conjectured to mean a weed-hen.

this word, however, although the two court poets of their age, Chaucer and Gower, used the English word *knighthode*, for chivalry, the French word has subsequently superseded it. When we go to other classes of subjects, the caprice shown in the adoption of words from either language is still more incomprehensible. Thus, it would be difficult to say why, among flowers, we have adopted the Anglo-Norman names of lilies, violets, dandelion, germander, plantain, &c., and have retained the Anglo-Saxon ones of daisies, cowslips, thistles, honeysuckles, and a numerous list of others; or why, in some cases, we have preserved the Anglo-Saxon names of fish, such as whales, seals, lobsters, crabs, eels, &c., when others have been abandoned to adopt in their places such names as salmon, tenches, sturgeons, gudgeons, perches, lampreys, and some others, which are Anglo-Norman. We can indeed discover no general law or rule which influenced in any degree the adoption of particular words from one language or the other. The two languages continued long to exist independently, and people who wrote in English might adopt at their own caprice a word from one or the other.

In one respect, however, these two languages in England stood on a very different footing, for, while the Anglo-Norman words which were finally rejected from our written language, ceased to exist among us with the language itself, a vast number of the Anglo-Saxon words which disappeared from the English language as it was written and spoken in cultivated society, were preserved among the populace and the peasantry, and contributed to form the trivial language of the common people, or, much more extensively, of our provincial dialects. Words are easily

rejected from the language of cultivated society, but the tenacity with which the peasantry especially, and the lower classes of the population generally, retain the old words and phraseology of their mother tongue, through many ages, is truly extraordinary. One or two examples have occurred to me which I think deserve to be remembered. The Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of archbishop Alfrie, compiled in the tenth century, gives the Latin and Anglo-Saxon equivalents, "*constructio, vel instructio, hyrdung.*" The modern Anglo-Saxon lexicographers, puzzled by the Latin words, appear to have been able to make nothing of the Anglo-Saxon word *hyrdung*, and have given it in their dictionaries without explanation. The natural derivation of it would be from the verb *hyrdan*, to guard, or keep. Now, you can hardly pass for any length of time through the streets of our larger towns without seeing, in one place or another, a house in the process of repairing or rebuilding, and you will generally see that it is surrounded with a tolerably lofty and strong frame-work of boards, for the protection of the work and the workmen. If you ask the latter what they call this wooden frame-work, they will tell you at once a *hoarding*. I have little doubt that this is the identical *hyrdung* of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, especially as it is there placed among one or two other words connected with building; and you will thus see that our common builders have actually preserved, during the vicissitudes of eight centuries, a word which seemed so entirely lost to the world that by them alone we are able to give it an explanation in an Anglo-Saxon dictionary. An English-Latin dictionary of the fifteenth century, known by the title of the *Prompto-*

rium Parvulorum, furnishes us with another example. You will there find, under the letter L, the words, "Locchester, wyrm," meaning that *locchester* was the name of a kind of worm, and the Latin equivalent *multipes* is added. Now, as the word *worm* had in Anglo-Saxon and Old-English a very extensive meaning, and as the Latin *multipes*, meaning simply an animal with many feet, was not much more definite; the modern editor of the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, Mr. Way, was unable to fix the exact meaning of the English word—and there seemed no means left of ascertaining it, until, one day, my friend, Mr. Halliwell, walking in a garden in Oxfordshire, accidentally overheard the gardener talking about *lockchesters*, and immediately asking him what these were, received for answer that they were *woodlice*. On a further inquiry he ascertained that *lockchest*, or *lockchester*, was not an uncommon word in some parts of Oxfordshire for a woodlouse, although it was rapidly going out of use. As the *Promptorium Parvulorum* was compiled in Norfolk, this must, in the fifteenth century, have been an ordinary word for a *woodlouse*, and not confined to a particular locality. Again, reading one of the comedies of the age of Charles II, "The Cheats," published in 1662, the scene of which is laid in London, I meet with the following language, put into the mouth of one of the characters: "O my child, my child, thy father is prettie *hoddie* again, but this will break his heart quite." The old dictionaries give the word *hoddy* as meaning hearty, or strong; but I have looked in vain for it in any dictionary of the present day, until I happened to open a glossary of the East Anglian dialect, in which I find that the word still exists in the

sense of "well; in good spirits." It appears clear, from this and other examples which I could quote from the writings of the same period, that a multitude of words were in general use in the common language of England so late as the latter half of the seventeenth century, which now exist only in some local dialect. This shows us the great importance, in a philological point of view, if in no other, of collecting and publishing the words of our provincial dialects.

These dialects show us in many ways the curious manner in which the Anglo-Saxon language was broken up for the formation of modern English. It must not be supposed that Anglo-Saxon words became obsolete merely because they were displaced from the English language by Anglo-Norman words, for words of Anglo-Saxon origin were continually displacing one another. In the first place, the Anglo-Saxon language, as I have remarked before, was copious in words, and it often happens that out of a number of names for the same thing, or verbs expressing the same or a similar action, one or two only have survived. In the second place, it seems evident that among the Anglo-Saxons themselves there were numerous words, then only used in popular conversation or in particular districts, which, in the course of time, gained the superiority over their prouder synonyms, and finally superseded them. Hence, while a great number of what are known to have been good Anglo-Saxon words have been expelled from the English language, their places have been taken by others, also no doubt Anglo-Saxon, which are so strange to us that all we can absolutely say of them is, that they are not Anglo-Norman.

This, also, will perhaps be best illustrated by a few examples. I will take the first from the language of agriculture. The only word we find used in the Anglo-Saxon writers for a plough is *sulh*, yet we are certain that some such word as *ploh* or *plog*, with this meaning, did exist in that language, not only because we know that plough is not an Anglo-Norman word, but because we find the word *ploh* used once in the Anglo-Saxon laws to signify what was afterwards called a *ploughland*, because an Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical document speaks of a tax levied by the church on the agriculturists under the title of *plou-ælmesse*, for which another document gives the synonym *sulh-ælmesse*, and because, further, we find the representative of the word in the modern German is *pflug*. What, therefore, must have been in the Anglo-Saxon period only a popular, or an almost obsolete, name for a plough, has actually in the modern English language superseded the regular Anglo-Saxon name of a plough, *sulh*, which now only exists in the dialects of the West of England, where a plough is still called by the peasantry a *sull*, *sullow*, or *sowl*.* The Anglo-Saxons had several verbs to signify the operation of

* It is curious that the word *sullow* for a plough, with *ban-nut* for a walnut, and one or two other words, now peculiar to the dialects in the west of England, and not found, as far as I know, in any of the old English writers, occur in a Latin and English vocabulary of the earlier part of the fifteenth century, printed in the same volume of vocabularies mentioned in a former note as published under the auspices of Mr. Mayer, and evidently compiled in that part of the island. This would seem to show that even the verbal peculiarities of the principal English dialects are much older than we might otherwise be led to suppose, and perhaps even this has some connection with the history of the word *sulh* and *plough*, as given in the text.

ploughing, such as *erian*, *fyrian*, and *tilian*. Of these, the first, in the form to *ere* or to *ear*, remained in general use in the English language until the sixteenth century, and is perhaps still in use in some of the local dialects. *Fyrian* is only retained in the sense of to furrow, or make furrows; and *tilian* remains in the more general sense of to *till* the ground. We now, in English, call the operation only *ploughing*, from the name of the machine used in performing it. Again, the only Anglo-Saxon word we know for a window is *eage-thyrl*, meaning literally an eye-hole, from which we derive a more vivid picture of the sort of openings by which the interior of an Anglo-Saxon house was lighted than a long description would convey to us. Larger openings for light came into use probably in Norman times, and they, as well as all windows, were called by the Anglo-Normans *fenestres*, in modern French *fenêtres*. It is a curious circumstance that the Teutonic dialects on the Continent have generally adopted the French word, which of course represents the Latin *fenestra*; in modern German a window is called a *fenster*. Yet the English language has thrown off what would have been its Anglo-Norman word *fenester*, and has retained in its place not the Anglo-Saxon word we know, but another, which does not occur among the words of the Anglo-Saxon language that have been preserved, though I think that the English word *window* is found as early as the thirteenth century, and it is doubtless a purely Anglo-Saxon word, and bears the same relation to *wind* which the Spanish word *ventána* for a window bears to *viento*. Again, among the Anglo-Saxon names for a sword are *sweord*, *seax*, *bill*, *brand*, *mece*, and *ord*. Of these, the last signified literally

the edge of a weapon, and it and the three preceding words belonged properly to the language of poetry, and therefore soon became obsolete. The word *seax* has also been lost, and *sword* has superseded all the others. The principal Anglo-Saxon words for an arrow were *arewa*, *fla*, *sceaft*, and *stræl*. The first is the only one of the four which remains in its original sense, although *fla* or *flo* was retained till the fifteenth century, and in Sussex they still call an arrow a *streal*. The common Anglo-Saxon names for a river, taking them in alphabetical order, were, *becc*, *broc*, *burne*, *ea*, *flod*, *rith*, or *ryth*, and *stream*. The precedence of all these has been taken by the Anglo-Norman word *rivere*. The word *ea*, which appears to have been the most general Anglo-Saxon word for a river, has only remained in the innumerable names of localities, into the composition of which it enters. *Rith* is also lost. *Broc* remains in the modern *brook*, while *burn* is preserved in a similar sense in the dialects of the North of England, and *becc* continues to exist in the *beck* of some of the northern provincial dialects, and in the *bach* of the dialects of the Welsh border. Of the ordinary Anglo-Saxon names for a hall, *heal*, *caffertun*, *inburh*, *sal*, and *sele*, the first is the only one preserved in the English language, although the two last might have been supposed to have had the greater chance of lasting, as being identical with the Anglo-Norman word *sale*. Another curious instance of the capricious character of these word-revolutions and vicissitudes in our language is furnished by the names of the rabbit. It is somewhat remarkable that the Anglo-Saxon dictionaries give us no word for a rabbit, but from the thirteenth to the beginning of the last century the common English name for this animal was a *conig* or *cony*.

There is some room for doubt whether this word be Anglo-Norman, in which language a rabbit was called a *connil* or *connin*, or whether it be of Anglo-Saxon origin, for the same animal is still called in German *kaninchen*. Both, no doubt, represent the Latin *cuniculus*. But this word *cony*, for some cause or other, was in the last century entirely superseded by that of *rabbit*, which must no doubt have been an Anglo-Saxon word, because it is found in another Low German dialect, the Dutch, under the forms *robbe* and *robbekin*. It is found in the *Promptorium Parvulorum* of the fifteenth century with the signification of a young rabbit—"Rabet, yonge conye, *cunicellus*." I do not remember having met with the word in the English language at an earlier period. I may quote another example of the movements and vicissitudes of words in our language from the nomenclature of birds. The Anglo-Saxon vocabularies give to the Latin word *turdus*, the two interpretations *scric* and *stær*, and they explain the Latin *merula* by *thrisc* or *throsle*. Yet the Latin *turdus* is usually understood as meaning a thrush, and *merula* as signifying a blackbird. Under the Anglo-Normans the word *mauvis*, anglicised into *mavis*, was introduced to signify a thrush, and almost superseded the latter word in the English language, although *throstel*, or more usually *throstel-cock*, continued to be used. At the same time, the Anglo-Norman word *merle*, from the Latin *merula*, came in to signify a blackbird. This shows that the original meaning of the Latin *merula* was well known, and would lead us almost to suppose that the Anglo-Saxons may have meant a blackbird by *thrisc* and *throstle*. The English glossaries of the fifteenth century still interpret *merula* by

thrystel-cock, and *mauvis* continued to be the English word for a thrush, and it long held its place in the language of literature. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon words *thrush* and *throstle* have finally regained their position as the sole acknowledged names, in the English language, of the song-thrush, and have expelled their Anglo-Norman equivalent *mavis*, and in this case it is the Anglo-Norman word that remains in our dialects. In the north of Essex, and I believe in other parts of East Anglia, a singing thrush is still called a *mawis*. One of the Anglo-Saxon equivalents of the Latin *turdus* is preserved in the *schreech*-thrush, a provincial name for the missel-thrush; and the other, *stare*, is now used in the signification of a starling. Again, the names cowslip, or cowslop, (*cusloppa*), and oxslip (*oxan-slippa*), are purely Anglo-Saxon, and have preserved their place in the language—though not quite undisputed, for another word *paigle*, the derivation of which seems very uncertain, though its form appears to bespeak an Anglo-Norman origin, had intruded itself into the English language before the sixteenth century. There is some reason for believing that the *paigle* was originally the oxslip. It was a word in common use among the English writers of the Elizabethan period; yet it has now dropped into a provincial word, and, singularly enough, in Essex it seems to have changed places with cowslip. In the neighbourhood of Saffron-Walden the name *paigle* is given to the common cowslip (the *primula veris*), while the oxslip (the *primula elatior*), which is very abundant there, is called a *cowslip*. The language of natural history was especially rich and copious among our forefathers, whether Anglo-Saxon or English, which seems to show

the existence among all classes, and at all periods, of a great love for nature, and a tendency to observe natural objects. In the comparatively small proportion which remains of the popular language of the Anglo-Saxons, we find numerous synonyms for plants, animals, birds, &c., many of which have been since lost, though some are preserved in a remarkable manner, and where we should least expect it. It is from this class of words especially that our provincial dialects are enriched. Thus, our Anglo-Saxon forefathers called a grasshopper a *gærs-hoppa*, (grasshopper), or a *gærs-stapa* (grass-stepper), or a *hama*, or a *hil-hama*, or a *secge-scere* (sedge-shearer), the first of which names only is preserved in the English language, and I am not aware that any of the others exist even in our local dialects. I find a woodlouse called, in vocabularies of the fifteenth century, a *lockchester*, a *loklore*, and a *welbode*; and in those of the sixteenth a *cheselip*, or *cheslop*, a *kitchin-bole*, and a *woodlouse*. Of these, the last only will be found in a dictionary of modern English, but I have already remarked that the name of *lockchester* is preserved among the peasantry of Oxfordshire, and I may add, that the peasantry in the North of England still call a woodlouse a *kitchin-ball*, and that those of the Southern dialects call it a *chissel-bol*, which is perhaps the representative of *cheslop*. The other two names appear to have become quite obsolete. In the *Nomenclator*, a copious Latin and English vocabulary, published in the year 1585, we have three synonyms for the glowworm, namely, *glowbird*, *glowworm*, and *lightworm*. I think that I have heard a glowworm called a *glowbird* in some one of our local dialects. The same vocabulary gives to a well-known

plant, the *leontodon taraxacum*, the several names following: *dandelion*, *priest's crown*, *swine's snout*, *monk's head*, *dog's teeth*, and *common cicorie*. The first of these names, which is derived from the French, is the only one of them now acknowledged in the English language; I am not aware that any of the others are in use. The same vocabulary gives as synonyms, *libbard's bane* (i. e. leopard's bane), *wolf's bane*, and *monk's hood*. All these three names of plants are still preserved, but the first is applied to the *doronicum pardalianches*, and the two others to the *aconitum napellus*. Two names of the latter are recorded in the vocabularies of the Anglo-Saxon period, *on-red* and *thung*, neither of which is preserved in the language. These few examples, which might be multiplied almost infinitely, will, I think, sufficiently explain how words have disappeared, and reappeared, in our language, and in its provincial dialects, and at the same time show that the further investigation of this part of the subject would not be without interest.

But it is here a digression, which I must follow no longer. As I have already stated, the two languages representing Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman, but which at this period we may better describe as French and English, continued to exist in England independently during the whole of the fourteenth century, although there was a constant interchange of words going on between them. I do not mean to say that this interchange was then a permanent one, although a certain number of Anglo-Norman words had already been firmly engrafted on the English tongue. We have no means of knowing what was the exact character of the language of popular conversation at this period, which we may, however, suppose to have

been still very decidedly Saxon; but we know that an English writer used just as many French words as he pleased, or as suited the class of readers to whom he addressed himself. Thus, one of the most remarkable poems in our language, the *Visions of Piers Ploughman*, which was put forth as the grand proclamation of a demand for popular reform and of the doctrines of popular freedom, is written not only in a language which contains a very small number of Anglo-Norman words, but it is composed in the same form of alliterative verse, without rhymes, which was peculiarly characteristic of pure Anglo-Saxon poetry. This sudden reappearance of the ancient Anglo-Saxon form of versification in the middle of the fourteenth century is itself a remarkable phenomenon, and it is an equally curious circumstance that this description of versification, which became thenceforward for some time popular among the people, is generally filled with a great number of purely Anglo-Saxon words, of a sort which we had long missed in English literature, and which we had every reason for believing had long become obsolete. Yet it is not likely that men who wrote for popularity would use obsolete words, which they would hardly be likely to understand themselves, and which certainly would not be understood by their hearers or readers. We must, therefore, conclude that even down to the end of the fourteenth century, "among the people," the mass of the words of the Anglo-Saxon language, much of its phraseology and construction, and even its forms of versification, continued to exist.

On the other hand, when people wrote for the aristocracy, or for the court, they adopted the French forms of verse, and filled their language with what

we should now consider an extravagant proportion of French words. Such is the case in a great degree with Chaucer, who has been very erroneously termed “a well of English undefiled;” and the reason why the writings of Chaucer are more easily understood by people in general than *Piers Ploughman*, or than many of the other literary monuments of the time, must be sought in the circumstance that a great proportion of the obsolete words in Chaucer are French, while nearly all those in the other writers alluded to are Anglo-Saxon, and as most modern readers have some knowledge of the French language, but very few know Anglo-Saxon, they are naturally less embarrassed by the verses of the old court poet than by those of the man of the people.

It will thus be understood that at the end of the fourteenth century the English language was in a very unsettled condition, and that in the hands of writers of different class or rank it assumed every variety of character, from that which presented the pure Anglo-Saxon element almost unmixed to that which was more than half French. Immediately after this period, the use of the French language in our island was entirely superseded by the English. It was the fifteenth century, low as it stood in literary character, which performed the great work of purging and purifying. By a process which we cannot distinctly trace, and which we certainly cannot clearly explain, though it appears to have been in a great measure spontaneous, the English language, during the fifteenth century, rejected a very considerable proportion of the French words with which it was encumbered, and at the same time dropped an equally large quantity of superfluous Anglo-Saxon, which

now became entirely obsolete, or fell, as I have just shown, into our local dialects. The English language was also undergoing another change during this period, which we must probably ascribe, in a great measure, to the revolution which was taking place in the social condition, and to the more active movement in commerce and politics. I have told you how, in the course of the twelfth century, the Anglo-Saxon language underwent an organic change in its verbal forms and inflections. Although the latter, however, were greatly simplified, and although the degradation continued during the thirteenth century, they were not entirely lost; and the English language during the fourteenth century possessed a perfect grammatical construction, with regular inflections, indicating cases and numbers both of nouns and adjectives, and of numbers and persons of verbs, which are never transgressed in the manuscripts except by the mere carelessness of the scribes. These inflections, represented chiefly by the final *e* and *en*, will be found strictly observed in the language of Piers Ploughman in the middle of the fourteenth century, and they are no less carefully observed in that of Chaucer at the end of that period. It is, in fact, through ignorance of the nature of those inflections, and of the grammatical system of the English language in the fourteenth century, that the editors of our ancient poet, from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth, have done nothing but make confusion of his language and ruin the harmony of his verse. But immediately after Chaucer wrote, very early in the fifteenth century, the grammatical forms of the language began to be neglected, and people, pronouncing the words apparently more quickly,

first ceased sounding the final *e* of the inflections, and then let it drop altogether. The fifteenth century, in fact, was equally a period of transition from the condition of our language in the fourteenth century to modern English, as the twelfth century had been a period of transition from Anglo-Saxon to the English of the middle period. The invention of printing no doubt contributed towards the final purification of the English language, and to the settlement of its forms. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the English language, purged of the superfluous French and half-obsolete Anglo-Saxon which had previously encumbered it, and with very few grammatical inflections of any kind, assumed a form which prepared it for the glories of the Elizabethan period, and the language of Shakespeare is so well known, that I feel sure that it is unnecessary for me to follow its history any further.

I will, however, briefly point out a new danger to which the English language was exposed in the sixteenth century. The revival of learning was followed in England by an increased activity in scholastic education, and by an extraordinary reverence for the classical languages of antiquity. This soon assumed the character of a fashionable and exaggerated pedantry, and people began, both in conversation and writing, to interlard their English with Latin words, to which they merely gave an English form. In fact, as most writers and readers of books were now almost as well acquainted with the Latin language as with their own, the former began to assume towards it very much the same position which Anglo-Norman held towards Anglo-Saxon at an earlier period, and as each writer introduced into his Eng-

lish just as many Latin words as he pleased, it might have been a question at one time whether the language we were destined finally to speak would not have been a sort of mongrel between Latin and English. This affectation of Latin reached its greatest height in an age worthy of it, the reign of James I, after which it began rapidly to disappear, and, fortunately, but a very small number of the Latin words which had thus been intruded into our language have been retained. But in one respect this dragging of the English language into an unnatural relationship with the Latin language exercised a disastrous influence on its future. When men began to study the English language, and to seek and treat of its grammatical rules, they lay under a prejudice which had grown up with the Latinists, and which, unfortunately, had not died with them, and, forgetting that English was a language in itself, they took it for granted that its grammar was merely an English edition of Latin grammar, and where they found that the English forms as they existed did not agree with the rules of Latin grammar, they attempted to force them into concordance. This mistake has spoilt all the English grammars which have been published previous to our own days, and, unfortunately, we are not yet emancipated from it; nor shall we be emancipated until the language of Alfred the Great, and that of Piers Ploughman and Chaucer, are more generally taught in our higher schools and colleges. This is certain, that our grammarians and lexicographers have, during the last two centuries, been labouring in their ignorance to reject from the English language some of its purest and best phraseology.



XV.

ON THE ABACUS, OR MEDIÆVAL SYSTEM
OF ARITHMETIC.

IN the mathematical treatises of the ancients, the results of abstruse arithmetical calculations are given, without any indication of the exact process by which they were obtained. The operations of arithmetic taught and practised in the schools, being perhaps of a kind not easily expressed in writing, have perished with the schools themselves. It is self-evident that arithmetical operations of any extent could not be performed with the clumsy notation of the Greek or Roman numerals.

The somewhat varied writings of Boethius, who flourished at the beginning of the sixth century, were the channel through which chiefly the science and philosophy of the ancients passed to the middle ages, previous to the introduction of Arabian science in the twelfth century. A very obscure passage, at the end of the first book of the *Geometrica* of this writer, describes a tabular system of arithmetical

calculation, to which he gives the name of *abacus*, and he states that it was said to have been invented by the Pythagoricians, whence it was also called the *mensa Pythagorica*. The first of these names reminds us forcibly of the lines of Persius the satirist,—

Nec qui *abaco numeros* et secto in pulvere metas
Scit risisse vafer.

But so little has the passage in Boethius been understood in latter times, that his editors have generally substituted a common multiplication table for the diagram of the manuscripts. Aldhelm, at the end of the seventh century, tells us that he found arithmetic the most abstruse and difficult of all the sciences; but, until the time of the celebrated Gerbert (the end of the tenth century) we find no direct allusion to the mode in which arithmetical operations were performed. Gerbert (subsequently raised to the papacy as Sylvester II) is generally looked upon as the first who introduced the *abacus*, upon which he wrote a brief treatise containing rules, or rather the titles of rules, which were almost as obscure as the passage of Boethius. William of Malmesbury, in the middle of the twelfth century, when the system had been perfected, describes them as *regulæ quæ a sudantibus abacistis vix intelliguntur*. A larger treatise on the abacus—that is, on arithmetic—was composed by Gerbert's scholar, Bernelinus (probably Bernelmus, or Beornhelm), and from that time to the end of the twelfth century, treatises under the same title became very common, including one by a celebrated mathematician of the end of the eleventh century named Gerland. They are of frequent occurrence in early manuscripts. A much esteemed and learned

friend of the writer of the present article, M. Chasles* (member of the Institute of France, and professor of pure geometry at the Ecole Polytechnique), by a careful comparison of these different treatises, first demonstrated—and that in my opinion to absolute conviction—that they all relate to one system of arithmetical operations, which was the same as that alluded to in the passage of Boethius, and which, in fact, was identical in principle with the system in use at the present day.

A monk of St. Remi at Rheims, named Richerius, the friend and disciple of Gerbert, has left us a most interesting history of his own times, which has been published by the German antiquary Pertz; this writer has inserted in his annals an account of the chief philosophical instruments of his illustrious master. He tells us that Gerbert caused a manufacturer of shields to construct a table, which he divided into twenty-seven longitudinal columns, and he also caused to be made a thousand characters in horn, of the figures of the nine numerical symbols (probably square dice thus marked), by means of which he was enabled to express all numbers and make all calculations.† It appears clear that Ger-

* In his "Aperçu historique sur l'origine et le développement des méthodes en Géométrie." I can only refer my readers to this book, which I do not possess, and its title does not appear in the catalogue of the British Museum library. M. Chasles has more recently published and commented upon some early treatises on the abacus, in the transactions of the Académie des Sciences.

† Abacum, id est tabulam dimensionibus aptam opere scutarii effecit, cujus longitudini, in xxvii. partibus diductæ, novem numero notas omnem numerum significantes disposuit. Ad quarum etiam similitudinem, mille corneos effecit characteres,

bert's invention was the machine to apply to a system which was already in use, and the obscurity of his brief tract on the subject arose from our not having the machine to which it was intended to refer. Subsequent writers drew the figure of the abacus in their books, and from them we learn the forms of the characters or symbols made to represent the numbers.*

The object of the abacus machine of Gerbert was, by means of its columns, to represent what we now call the value of numerals by position. Characters, when placed in the first column to the right, represented units, and were termed *digiti*. Those placed in the second, third, &c., columns, represented tens, hundreds, and so forth, and were called indiscriminately *articuli*. On vellum these columns were represented by vertical lines. The nine numbers were represented by the following apparently arbitrary characters, to which were given the names *igin*, *andras*, *ormis*, *arbas*, *quinas*, *calcus*, *zenis*, *temenias*, and *celentis*, which seem equally arbitrary. Each

⁹ Celentis.	⁸ Temenias.	⁷ Zenis.	⁶ Calcus.	⁵ Quinas.	⁴ Arbas.	³ Ormis.	² Andras.	¹ Igin.
6	8	v	L	h	B	h	T	I

of these characters had a local power, according to the column in which it was placed: thus, *andras* in

qui per xxvii. abaci partes mutuati, cujusque numeri multiplicationem sive divisionem designarent, etc.—Richeri Hist., liber iii. c. 54.

* Manuscripts of Boethius contain the drawing of the abacus, with the figures of the characters, as described in the system of Gerbert. See a fine manuscript in the British Museum, MS. Lansdown, No. 842.

the first column represented 2, in the second 20, in the third 200, and so on. Thus the nine characters might be made to express all numbers whatever, and the processes of arithmetic were performed in what appeared a mechanical game—much resembling a game at chess or draughts—the results being taken and expressed in the ordinary Roman numerals. When, however, we consider that most of the processes of calculation, as then employed, were very complicated and intricate, and that the operators did not call the characters they were working with *one*, *two*, *three*, &c. but *igin*, *andras*, *ormis*, &c.—in fact they were continually obliged to translate numbers to characters and characters to numbers, as 12 is represented by *andras* in the first column, and *igin* in the second; 372 is represented by *andras* in col. 1, *zenis* in col. 2, and *ormis* in col. 3,—we may easily conceive the great confusion which must have been created in many people's heads, and understand perfectly why Aldhelm found arithmetic the most difficult of all the sciences.

The above representation of the characters of the abacus is copied from an imperfect manuscript of the treatise by Gerland, in the British Museum (MS. Arundel, No. 343), the book in which the principles of the science are most clearly explained. The first part of the solution of a very simple question in division, with two of the diagrams representing the table of the abacus and the method of proceeding, taken from this same manuscript, will give the best idea of the complicated nature of these operations. The question is that of dividing 120 pearls among three damsels; and after some introductory explanation, we are directed to “place the three girls in the

singular arc [the first column], a hundred pearls in

Fig. 1.

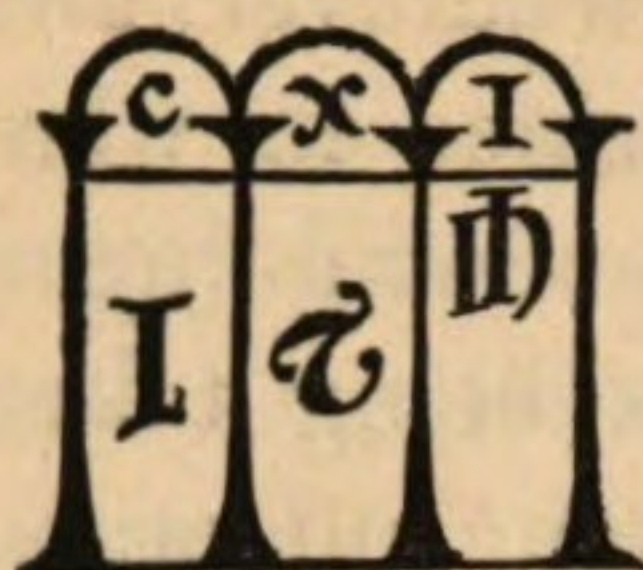


Fig. 2.

the centenal arc, and twenty in the decenal, thus" (see Fig. 1). This was done by placing *ormis* in the first column for the number of damsels, and *igin* in the third and *andras* in the second for the number of pearls. Gerland then goes on to say, "next transfer *ormis* as the divisor, and place him in the next arc to the thing to be divided, for he is greater than *igin*, and let it be arranged thus (Fig. 2). Then say, as many times as *ormis* is into *igin*, the same is three into ten, thrice and remains one. Take therefore the three, and place it under the three, and place the one which remains, that is *igin*, beside *andras*."* And thus it goes on, with two other diagrams, before the question is solved.

It was, in fact, a task upon the memory to carry in mind the names of the characters; and we accordingly find in old manuscripts a great number of memorial verses in Latin, composed to assist the memory; two of which, published by Mr. Halliwell, in his *Rara Mathematica*, from manuscripts of the fourteenth century, may be given as specimens. Sometimes the writer appears himself to have for-

* Pone tres puellas in singulari arcu, centum margaritas in centeno, et xx. in deceno, sic. Postea transfer ormin divisorem, et loca eum in proximo arco pecuniæ dividendæ, nam major est quam *igin*, et sit hujusmodi figura. Confestim dic, quoties est *ormis* in *igin*, idem ternarius in decem, ter et remanet unus: sume igitur ternarium, et suppose ternario, et unum qui remanet id est *igin*, pone juxta *andram*, etc., and so it goes on. —MS. Arundel, 343, fol. 2, vo.

gotten the name of a character, and to have substituted another, as in the first of these examples, where the sixth is called *termas* instead of *calcus* or *calcis*. In this first the names are numerated briefly in a distich:—

Primus igin; andras; ormis; quarto subit arbas;
Quinque quinas; termas; zenis; temenias; celentis.

The other is rather more detailed:—

Unus adest igin; andras duo; tres reor armin;
Quatuor est arbas; et pro quinque fore quinas;
Sex calcis; septem zenis; octo temenias;
Novem celentis; pro deno sume priorem.

The system of the abacus appears to have continued in use with little alteration till late in the twelfth century. M. Chasles has printed an anonymous treatise from a manuscript of the end of that century, which appears to have been composed not long previous to that date. Early in the twelfth century the knowledge of Arabian science began to be introduced into the schools of western Europe, and this perhaps exerted some influence in modifying it. To simplify the operations of arithmetic, it was necessary to get rid of the tabular process, and to abolish the embarrassing technicalities. During the twelfth century the mathematicians were gradually throwing away the columns of the abacus, and giving independent value of position to the characters, though they had not yet come to regard them as numerals. They now found it necessary to denote in some manner what in the tabular process was represented by leaving the place blank; and they invented for this purpose a new character, represented

by a circle, to which they gave the name of *siphos* or *ciphos*. It was not till a later period, when the characters had long been regarded as numerical figures, that their original names were dropped; for we have seen that memorial verses to enable people to remember these names are found in manuscripts as late as the fourteenth century; but in the sequel, the name of the *siphos*, corrupted into *cipher*, was the only one retained.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the table in columns had entirely disappeared, and we then find the name *abacus* exchanged for that of *algorismus*, which (in English *algrim* and *awgrim*) was the name commonly given to the science of arithmetic until the sixteenth century. One of the first treatises on *algorismus* was by an English scholar named Johannes de Sacro-bosco, who is said to have died about the year 1235. His system is seen at once to be that of the abacus, with the addition of the *sipos* (or, as he calls it, *cifra*) to enable the operator to dispense with the columns. The very words of the old writers, which had reference to the tabular columns, are retained to denote the position of the figures, and the technical terms remind us of the columns at every step. The numbers, according to their position, are still *digiti* and *articuli*.* The figures are still understood as being characters by which number is artificially represented.† Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, a well-known

* Numerorum alius digitus, alius articulus Digitus quidem dicitur omnis numerus minor denario; articulus vero est omnis numerus qui potest dividi in decem partes æquales, ita quod nihil residuum sit.

† Numeri per figuras competentes artificialis repræsentatio.

writer, Alexander de Villa-Dei (or Villedieu) composed memorial verses, not for the names of the characters, but comprising the whole system of arithmetic, under the title of *Carmen de Algorismo*, a tract which must have been extremely popular, if we judge by the number of manuscripts in which it occurs.* The abacus, or table, was still retained, but without the columns. I think that I have seen a drawing in an early manuscript representing a person operating on the Boethian abacus, but I have mislaid the reference; representations of the algorismus table are less rare. In the annexed cut, taken from a manuscript of the end of the thirteenth or commencement of the fourteenth century (MS. Burney, No. 275, p. 667), a female, the personification of arithmetic, is teaching her disciples the science of algorismus:—she appears to be drawing the figures with a style on a table covered with wax or some other soft substance. Another representation of a person working on the algorismus table will be found in a manuscript of the fourteenth century, in the British Museum (MS. Harl. No. 4350, fol. 15, v°.)



It is now very difficult to say how far the know-

* This and the treatise of Johannes de Sacro-bosco are both printed by Mr. Halliwell in the "Rara Mathematica."

ledge of the Arabian system of arithmetic may have influenced the changes which were thus taking place in our mediæval system. So much knowledge was borrowed from the Saracens during the twelfth century, that it became the fashion to ascribe to them the origin of many things which were known long before the intercourse which led to the introduction amongst our forefathers of the Arabian sciences. William of Malmesbury, in the middle of the twelfth century, supposed that Gerbert had obtained the knowledge of the abacus from the Spanish Arabs; a notion which was, certainly, without foundation. The writer of the anonymous treatise on the abacus, of the end of the twelfth century, printed by M. Chasles, goes so far as to assert that the name *abacus* is an Arabic word.* Alexander de Villa-Dei, and other writers of the thirteenth and subsequent centuries, imagined that the characters used in the system of algorismus were derived from the Arabs and the Indians; and hence they have eventually obtained the title of *Arabic numerals*. A single glance, however, is sufficient to show that the figures of the algorismus are identical in every respect with the characters of the abacus, having merely passed through modifications inevitable when they came into more frequent use. For the sake of comparison, I give three specimens of arithmetical numerals, of different dates. No 1 is taken from the earliest manuscript of the treatise of Sacro-bosco that I have been able to find in the British Museum (MS. Arundel, No. 332, fol. 68, ro.), written in the latter

* *Ars ista vocatur abacus; hoc nomen vero Arabicum est, et sonat mensa.*

part of the thirteenth century. No. 2 is taken from another copy of the same work (MS. Reg. 8, C. iv. fol. 36, vo.), written in the earlier part of the four-

1 98A64R372

2 098R64R372

3 898A64R322

teenth century. No. 3 is taken from a calendar of the earlier half of the fifteenth century (MS. Sloane, No. 2927). It may be observed that in a manuscript calendar in the Cottonian library (Vespas. E. vii), which appears to have been written in the year 1380, the forms of the numerical figures are nearly identical with those of No. 3. We see, by these examples, how our modern numerals were derived from the characters of the abacus. Several of them have hardly been changed. It is probable that *andras* was a mere horizontal line, with a vertical curved line under it; the 2 of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was a horizontal line with vertical line below, which latter took gradually a curling form, and later on in the fourteenth century the position of the figure was reversed. *Ormis* is at once identified with the figure 3. *Arbas* was rather more complicated in its form, and has, consequently, gone through a greater change to make it convenient for writing rapidly: it may, however, still be easily identified; the common form of the figure 4 during the fifteenth century was **R**, to which, after the invention of printing, a more angular shape was given.

Quinas is found in some manuscripts in a reversed position ;—from either the transition to the 5 is easy enough. The similitude between *calcus* and 6 need hardly be pointed out. *Zenis* is also frequently reversed ; both limbs are sometimes of the same length, which was the case in the form of the 7 in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries ; during the latter century, the common form of the 7 was $\wedge$. *Celentis* has only to be reversed to become 9. The *siphos* was represented, as in No. 2, by a circle with a line across, and seems, from the words of Sacrobosco,* to have been intended for a Greek Θ .

It is important, in various respects, for the antiquary thus to know historically the origin and transformation of the mediæval numerals. Various instances occur of inscriptions on buildings in the so-called Arabic numerals, apparently of an early date, which have been severally the subject of obstinate discussion, simply because both disputants were equally ignorant of the subject they were discussing. Such an inscription has been ascribed even to the eleventh century. This, it will at once be seen, is impossible, and the error has probably arisen from taking a 4 of the fifteenth century, of which the lower limbs had been nearly erased, for a 0. Even in the twelfth century, these characters were no more looked upon as numerals, than our modern algebraical *a*, *b*, *c*, and *x*, *y*, *z* ; none but a mathematician knew what they meant ; and if he had seen a date on a building expressed in such figures, he would probably have wondered for what magical purpose four characters

* Decima figura dicitur *theta*, vel nihil significat, sed locum tenens dat circulus, vel cifra, vel figura nihili quia aliis significare.

of the abacus had been stuck up against the wall. Both in the treatises on the abacus, and in those on the algorismus, down to a late period, the figures are only used in the operations, the results of which are stated in words or in Roman numerals. The former were considered as things only belonging to science. Charpentier, in his supplement to the *Glossarium* of Ducange, cites a document, of which he does not give the date (but it was probably of the thirteenth century), in which books that appear to have been marked with these figures are distinguished as *libri signati per abacum*.* Even at the end of the fourteenth century, the figures were still considered as signs belonging to the science of “awgrim;” a passage in the curious poem on the deposition of Richard II. informs us that,—

Than satte summe,
As siphre doth in awgrym,
That noteth a place
And nothing availeth.

It was only in the fourteenth century that these algorismic numerals became generally used in books, and it is not probable that they would be used in inscriptions on buildings till long afterwards; it will be evident that they could not possibly be so used in the twelfth century, and I believe it to have been equally impossible in the thirteenth. Rare examples of inscriptions in these figures occur in the fifteenth; but even in the sixteenth, as it is well known, the prejudice was strongly in favour of the Roman numerals.

* Hinc *libri signati per abacum* in Stat. Mant. forte sunt codices notis numericis per singulas paginas signati.



XVI.

ON THE ANTIQUITY OF DATES EXPRESSED
IN ARABIC NUMERALS.



IN the preceding paper on the Abacus, I have remarked, that the use of the so-called Arabic numerals in manuscripts was not general, except in books of science, till late in the fourteenth century, and that they had not been found in inscriptions, in this country, before the fifteenth century. It will be useful as well as interesting to trace the history of such inscriptions, and to give a few examples of the forms of the figures, which will serve as a point of comparison for the researches of those who may have discovered such inscriptions, of which the age or reading is doubtful.

Dates in manuscripts, written in these numerals, are of great rarity, until so late as the end of the fifteenth century. David Castley, in the plates to his catalogue of the Royal Library, has given two or three examples, among a great number of dates expressed in Roman numerals. The earliest he had met with, is found in a Cottonian manuscript (Vespas. A. II), and it is necessary to observe that this is in a

work on astronomical science: the words are, *Anno Domini 1292, factus ad meridiem civitatis Tholeti*. The manuscript, moreover, appears on reference to have been written at a later period than this date. In a manuscript in the Royal Library (2 C. v.) we find the date 1334, written by a scholar and, probably, a man of science. The next known date in these numerals, in a manuscript in the same collection (2 B. viii), is attached to a calendar compiled by an astronomer of Oxford, in the year 1380. These are all connected with men of science. The *next* date known to Castley, also occurs in one of the royal manuscripts (6 D. ii), and is of the year 1467. Castley gives after this the dates 1488 (in MS. Reg. 14 C. vii), 1497 (in MS. Reg. 6 A. viii), and 1508 (in MS. Reg. 2 B. xiii).

It is evident, therefore, that until the fifteenth century the knowledge of these numerals was confined almost entirely to mathematicians, or arithmeticians, and that even at the end of the fourteenth century they were not in general use. This is confirmed by a curious passage of Chaucer's poem, commonly called in the old editions *The Dream of Chaucer*, but of which the more correct title appears to be *The Boke of the Duchess*: the poet, describing his dream, says:—

“ Shortly, it was so full of beasts,
That though Argus, the noble countour,
Sate to reckon in his countour,
And reckon *with his figures ten*,
For by *tho figures newe* all ken,
If they be craftie, reckon and number,
Yet should he faile to reckon even
The wonders me met in my sweven.”

The “new figures” are here distinctly mentioned as being used only by the “countour,” or arithmetician:

and the second *countour* is perhaps merely the popular name for the abacus, or table on which the arithmetician worked. I think none of Chaucer's commentators knew who this *Argus* was: *Algus*, or *Argus*, by some called a philosopher, by others a king of Castile, was the legendary inventor of arithmetic, which it was pretended took from him the name of *algorismus*. *

The earliest authentic date that has, as far as I can learn, been yet discovered in England, carries us no



No. 1.

farther back than the year 1445. It was kindly communicated to me by Mr. M. A. Lower, of Lewes, from whose rubbing the accompanying cut is carefully reduced. This date, as Mr. Lower informs me, appears on a stone in the interior of the tower of Heathfield

church, Sussex; the surface of the stone is much corroded by natural causes, and it has suffered still further from the vandalism of a blacksmith, who, while employed in repairing the bells, defaced it in part with a pick-axe; but it is still sufficiently distinct to leave no doubt of the date. G. S. are pro-

* Hanc igitur scientiam...edidit philosophus nomine Algus, unde Algorismus nuncupatur.—*Jo. de Sacro-Bosco, de Arte Numerandi*. Ab Algore rege quondam Castellie suo in Algorismo.—*Johannes Norfolk, in Artem Progressionis summula*. *L* and *r* were constantly interchanged in the languages of the middle ages, especially in French and English. In the *Image du Monde* we have,—

“En argorisme devon prendre,” &c.

bably the initials of a person who built or repaired the tower in 1445. Until lately the people of the neighbourhood imagined that this date was 1004!

Gough, in his *Funeral Monuments*, has given a plate of early dates in arithmetical figures, which contains a number of very good examples. The oldest with which he was acquainted was that of 1454, found on a brass in Ware church.

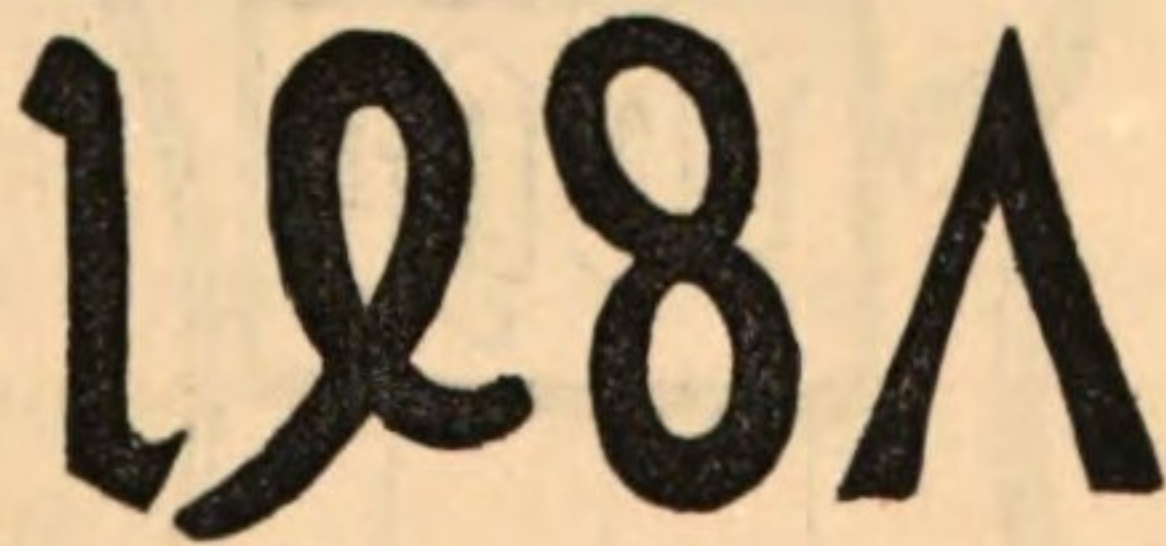
Our next cut, No. 2, the drawing of which was given me by Mr. J. G. Waller, represents part of a date on a brass in Thornton church, Bucks, of the year 1472. It affords a curious instance of a date expressed partly in words and partly in arithmetical figures: the whole inscription on the brass being:—



No. 2.

Armiger ecce pius jacet hic tellure Robertus
Ingylton, dominus de Thorneton jure patronus,
In quinto decimo moriens Octobris ab orbe
Ad celos transit, mille C quater hac 72 simul adde.
Sit sibi propicia celi regina Maria et
Salvet eum Christus matris amore deus.

The 7 is a good example of the ordinary form of that figure in the fifteenth century. It occurs again (No. 3) in the date 1487, in an inscription, for a rubbing of which I am indebted to Mr. Goddard Johnson of Norwich. It is carved on a wooden door at Arminghall, the interesting remains of an



No. 3.

ancient building about four miles from Norwich, an engraving of which is given in Cotman's *Antiquities*. This house is considered to be one of the *hospitia*, or

houses for the gratuitous entertainment of travellers, said to have been common in every county in England before the Reformation. The inscription, which runs across the door and is not very legible, appears to be,

Orate pro anima Magri. Willi . . . qui fecit fieri hoc ostium,
A^o xⁱ 1487.

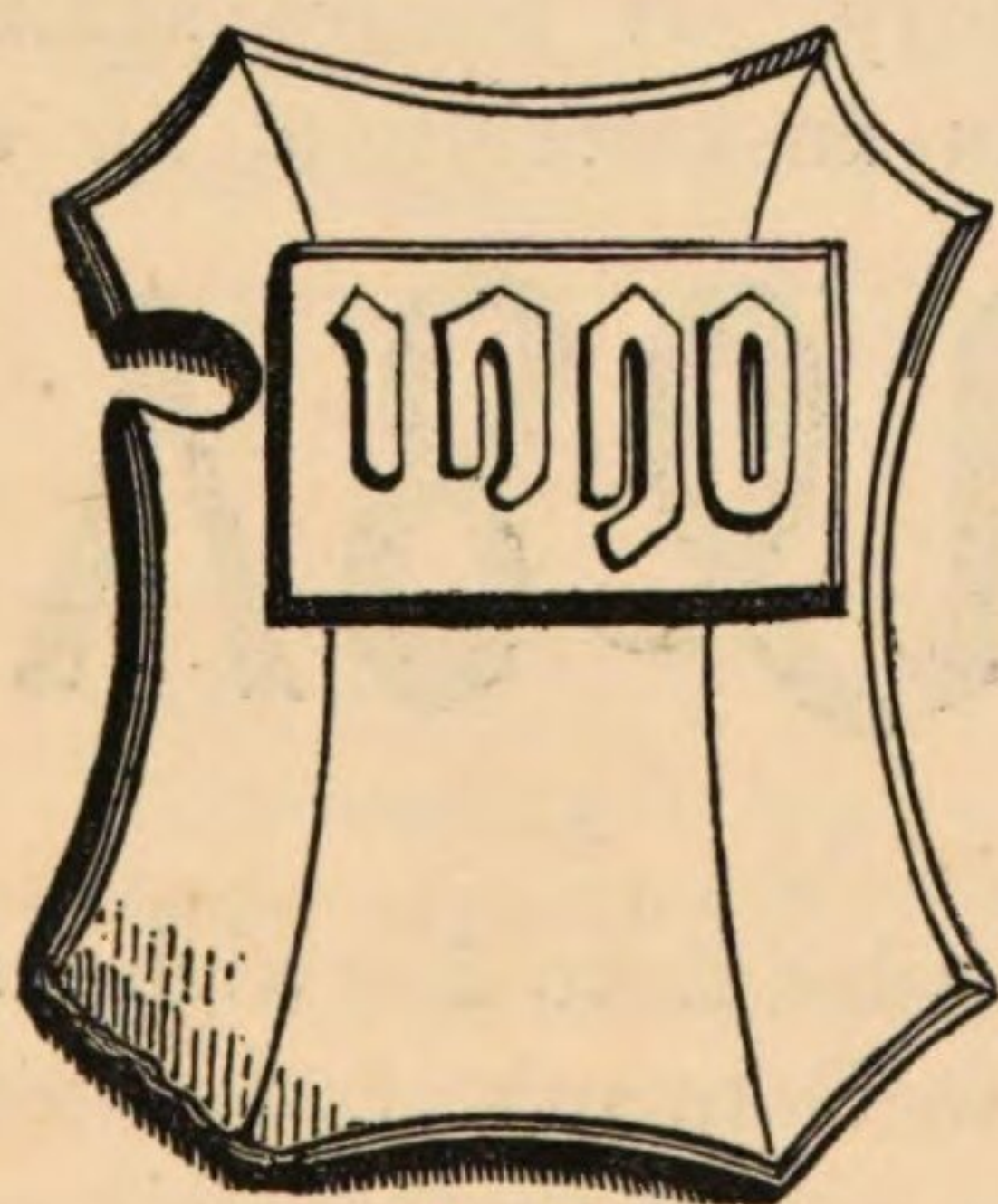
1782

No. 4.

The cut No. 4, for the drawing of which I am also indebted to Mr. Waller, represents the date 1489, on a brass in the church of Allhallows Barking, near the Tower, London, and is somewhat remarkable for the angular forms of the figures. The inscription on the brass is:—

Hic iacent Thomas Gilbert, quondam civis et pannarius London. ac mercator stapule ville Calisie, et Agnes uxor eius nuper uxor Johannis Saunders civis et pannarii civitatis predicte et mercatoris Stapule ville Calisie, qui quidam Thomas obiit xxvij^o die Aprilis anno Domini M cccc^o lxxxiiij.^o, et predicta Agnes obiit xiiij^o die Februarii a^o D. 1489

The same date is found in arithmetical figures in an inscription in bishop King's chapel, Windsor, which is engraved in *Funeral Monuments*.

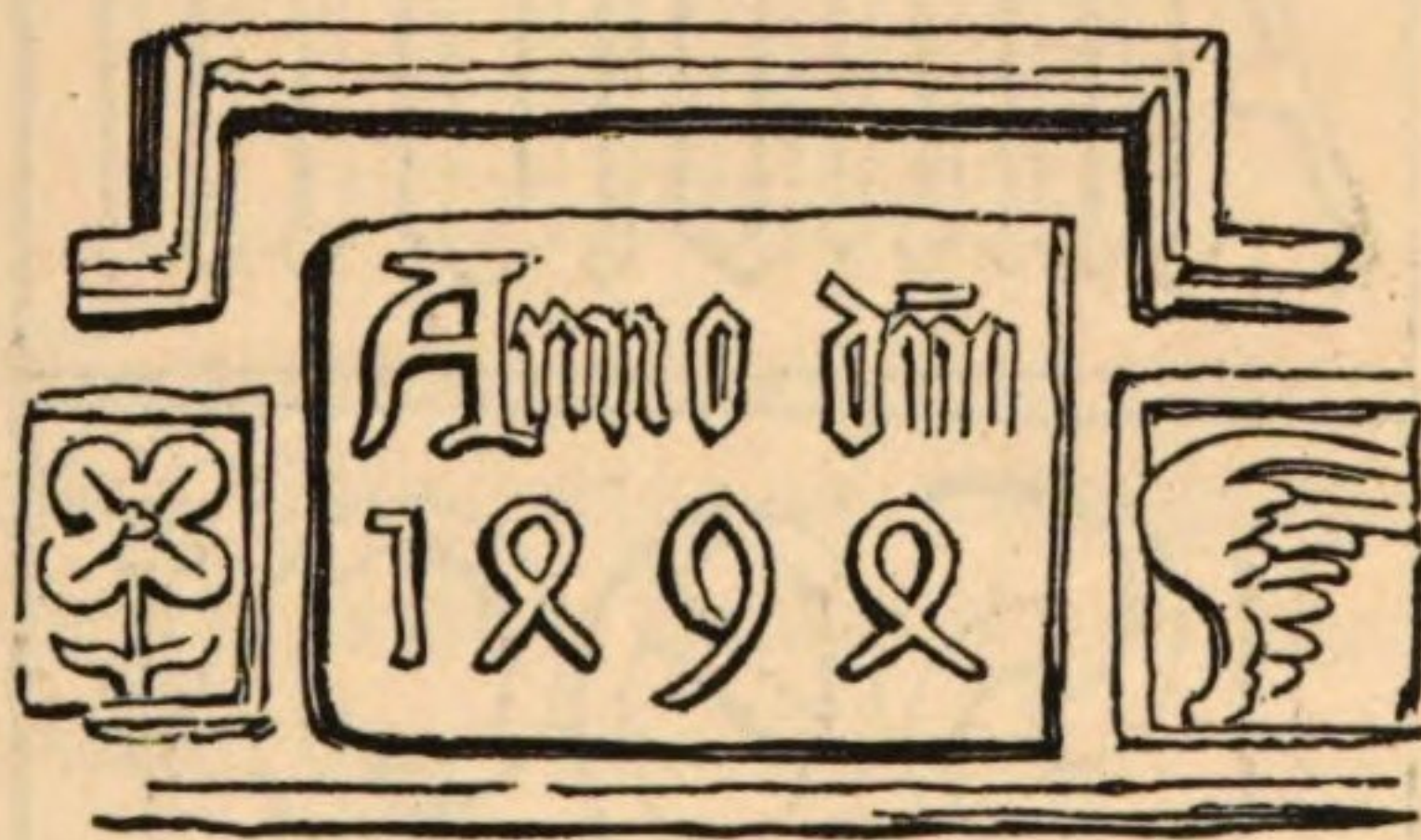


No. 5.

Our next example (No. 5) is the celebrated Colchester inscription, of the date 1490, which has been the object of so much discussion, and has by some been very absurdly taken for a genuine inscription of the date 1090. The shape of the shield, which is that common at the end of the

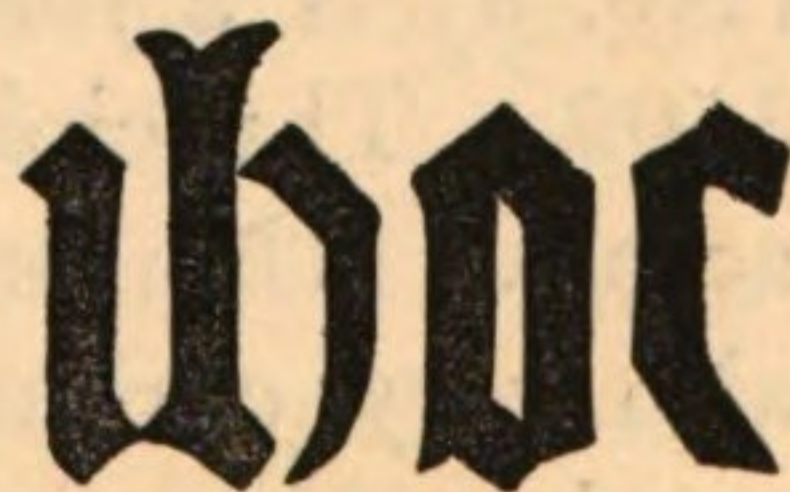
fifteenth century, ought to have deterred any one from forming such an opinion. Our cut is taken from a very faithful drawing, communicated by Mr. Sprague of Colchester, who observes, "upon examination, I found the shield had from time to time been repaired and patched, particularly at the base and dexter side; the *bouche* was entirely filled with putty, which I have removed, and which accounts for its not appearing in the engraving given in Cromwell's *Colchester*." It is carved on the sill of a window. The lower part of the 4 has been long defaced; but the general form of the figures is that of the large formal writing in the church service books of the latter part of the fifteenth century.

The next example that has occurred to me is represented in the cut No. 6. It is carved on a stone in the tower of Hadley church, Middlesex, and represents the date 1494. In a pane of glass in one of the windows of the hospital of St. Cross, we have the date 1499 in arithmetical figures, of a rather interesting form; they are engraved in Gough.



No. 6.

The reduced fac-simile of a date on a brass in St. Mary's Coslany church, Norwich (No. 7), was kindly sent me by the very rev. F. C. Husenbeth, of Cossey, who believed it to be 1507. Others have supposed it to be 1502. I am inclined to think the last figure

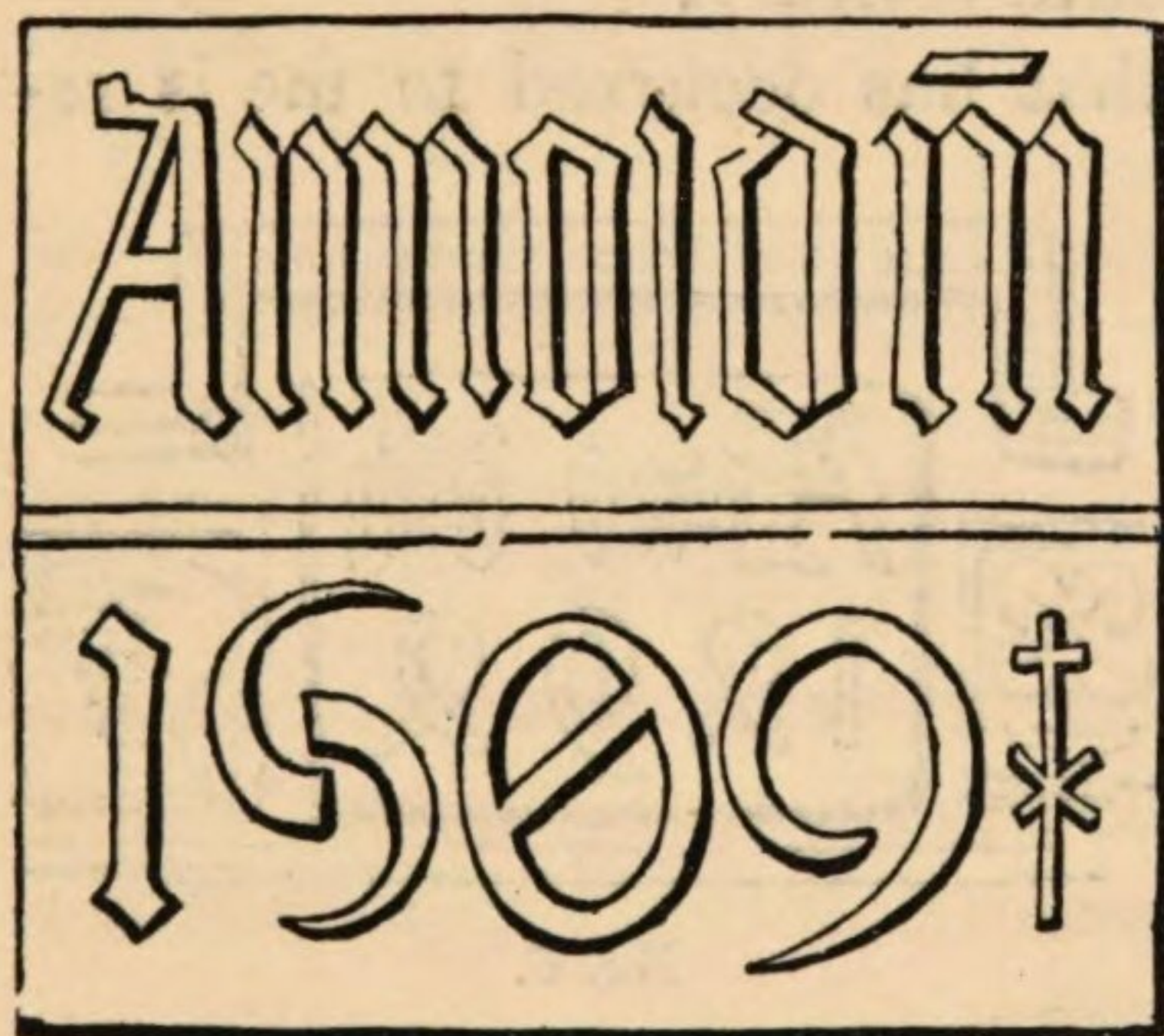


No. 7.

has been a 4, or a 0, now defaced in part. The form of the letters bears a general resemblance to those of the Colchester date. The 5 is the usual form of that figure in manuscripts of this period. In the entire inscription on this brass we have again an instance of the curious mixture of the usage of Roman numerals and arithmetical figures, which shows how slowly the latter came into general use:—

Orate pro anima Domini Roberti Mayo, quondam hujus ecclesie capellani paroch, qui obiit xxvij die Aug^{ti} a^o xⁱ 150—.

It is curious to observe how, even at this late period, the original forms of the figures are traditionally preserved in the inscriptions, amid the changes



No. 8.

which had followed the progress of the art of printing. In manuscripts of the beginning of the sixteenth century, as in the date 1508 given by Castley in his plate XVI, the cipher has a line drawn across it, which appears to have been its original form, al-

though partially lost during many years. In making some repairs at London Bridge, in the year 1758, a stone was found with an inscription of which the cut (No. 8) is a *fac-simile*, with the date *Anno Domini* 1509. The cipher has here similarly a line drawn across. The form of the 5, in this inscription, is also very curious, though I believe that other examples of it are found.

During the whole of the sixteenth century, in inscriptions, the 5 took different forms, resembling more or less the same figure as commonly written in France at the present day, and in many instances it is easily mistaken for a 1, particularly in inscriptions of the middle and latter half of the century. The cut, No. 9, taken from a drawing given me by Mr. Waller, represents the date 1526, on a painted glass window in South Mimms church, Middlesex. The next example (No. 10), also furnished me by Mr.

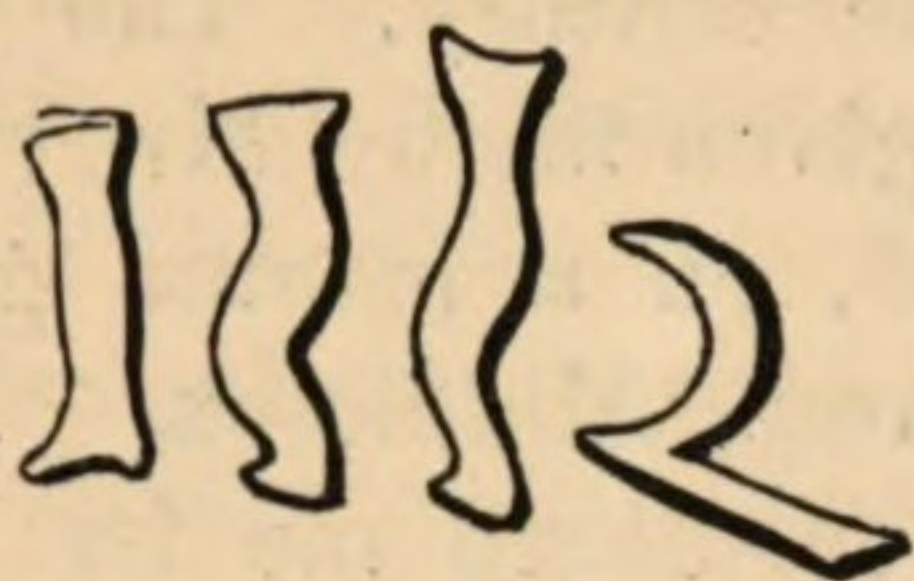
No. 9.

No. 10.

Waller, is the date 1537, carved on a wooden seat in Aldham church, Suffolk. The forms of the figures in both these examples are rather unusual; in the last, the 7, compared with the same figure, in our dates, Nos. 2 and 3, shows distinctly the manner in which the modern form originated from the old one. A 7, written nearly like this, is found in the date 1497, in the manuscript cited by Castley (MS. Reg. 6 A VIII).

The peculiar forms of the 5 in the sixteenth century were the source of most of the disputed interpretations of dates in arithmetical numerals, supposed to be older than the fifteenth century. The old form of the 4, sometimes mutilated, taken for a cipher, gave rise to the belief in such inscriptions being of the eleventh century. The 5, interpreted, sometimes as a

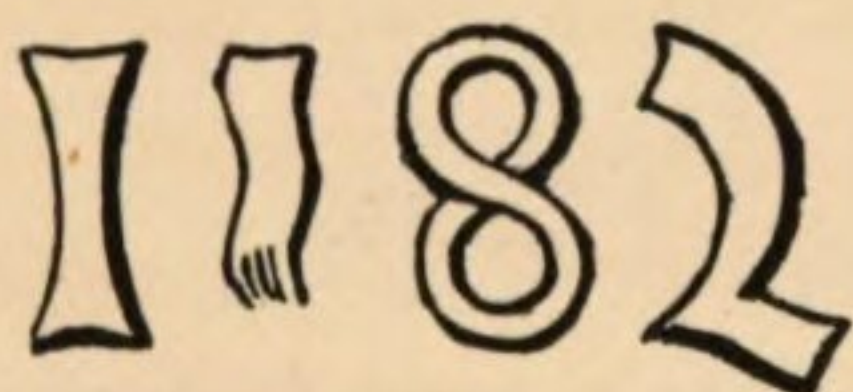
1, made dates of the twelfth century; sometimes, interpreted as a 2, it made dates of the thirteenth century; and lastly, taken for a 3, it furnished dates supposed to be of the fourteenth century. We begin with an example of the date 1552 (No. 11), carved on a



No. 11.

wooden beam at the Half-moon inn, near Magdalen College, Cambridge, the true interpretation of which cannot admit of a doubt; yet few dates have been

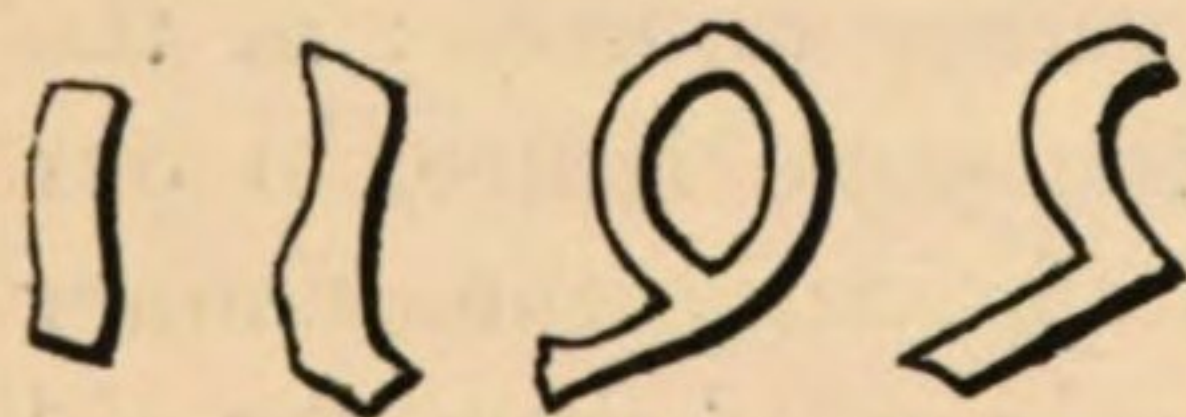
the object of more discussion, and several learned men have persisted in reading it as 1332, and giving that erroneous date to the timber-house in which it was found. The next (No. 12), of the date of 1582, is



No. 12.

from Walling, near Aldermaston, in Berkshire; the 5, here, is not very easy to be distinguished from a 1.

The third example (No. 13), is of the date 1592, cut on a beam in Ashford church; it also has been the subject of some discussion, one party asserting



No. 13.

that it represents 1292. It may be well to observe, that I have copied the three last examples from the plate in Gough. Instances of these dates of the fifteenth century being taken for the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, are not uncommon in different parts of England. Mr. Lower has pointed out to me three in Sussex alone,—“there are dates,” he says, “at Mayfield palace, and at Selmeston church, which have been stated to be of the four-

teenth century, in consequence of the 5 having been mistaken for a 3 ; and at Dalehurst there is another, which is doubtless of the sixteenth century, but which from the peculiar form of the five has been assigned to the twelfth." In Kent there are several examples of dates similarly mistaken. One of these has been the subject of much discussion—the ancient date formerly on the Oast House, and still preserved at Preston Hall in Aylesford. In a note from the Rev. Lambert B. Larking, of Ryarsh, I am informed that "it stands most clearly and decidedly '1102.' Hasted enters fully into the discussion, but leaves the question just where it was, and, after all, I can do little more. The fact is as he represents it to be. The figures are clearly meant to represent 1102, and nothing else, and it is equally clear that they were cut in the sixteenth century. The very forms of the letters declare it—the whole building is indisputably work of Elizabeth's time—of this there cannot be a doubt. A false date, then, was put up, whether intentionally or by mistake must remain matter of conjecture. It has always struck me that the whole was a blunder of the stone-cutter. In manuscripts of the sixteenth century, you well know how difficult it often is to distinguish between 5 and 1, especially when they are hastily written, as the correspondence of that day abundantly proves. In France, to this day, the same resemblance continues, and I should desire no better illustration of our argument than the first hotel bill which the traveller meets with on his arrival. When first put into his hand, he flatters himself that he has been feasting cheaply, but on payment of his bill, he finds all his units turned into 5's, and there ends his dream. My own early prac-

tical experience of this inconvenience, led me, many years ago, to account for this disputed date by supposing that Mr. Colepeper had written the order for his stonemason to cut the inscription 1502, and he, misreading it, cut '1102.' This was always from the first my interpretation of it; and a few years ago I was gratified at finding somewhat of a confirmation of my view among the muniments of the Colepeper family. It appears by the purchase-deed, 1505, that Edward Culpeper purchased the manor of Preston in that year. The first contract for purchase may have been made in 1502, and so fixed the date to that year. The Colepepers were evidently seated at Aylesford, and had considerable station and influence there, long before 1502, as I have abundant evidence from very early rolls; so that the purchase appearing to be comparatively much more modern than the Conqueror's days, (to which the family have been in the habit of ascribing the date of their planting themselves at Preston), need not at all deteriorate from their antiquarian glories—it merely refers to the possession of *Preston*—not to their other and probably larger possessions at Aylesford—for Preston in itself is a very small thing. Your paper on numerals in the last Journal has so strongly suggested the ease with which blunders may be made in reading dates, that I have taken a fresh start in this inquiry, and, quitting some of my old positions, I am led to ask whether the order was not to cut 1582. If it had been '1502,' the initials accompanying the date, in strict correctness, should have been E. C., as proved by the charter cited above. But in 1582 the estate was owned by Thomas Colepeper, and T. C. are the initials which *do* accompany the date on the build-

ings. He came into possession in 1571, and I find no Colepeper in the pedigree (at all events from Henry IV downwards) who bore T for his initial." There is another date, of the 16th century, over the door of Ightham Court Lodge, the ancient seat of the James family, with a palpable 5 *unmistakeable*, but which has been taken for a 1.*

AFTER this was written, I received from the Rev. C. W. Bingham, of Bingham's Melcombe, near Blandford, *fac-similes* of several early dates in the so-called Arabic numerals, on buildings in the county of Dorset. The earliest of these is the date of 1487, cut in free-stone in the belfry-door of the church of Piddletrenthide:—"It is remarkably little injured by time or other causes. The whole inscription is as follows, in Roman letters:—

Est pydeltrenth' villa in dorsedie
comitatu nastitur in illa quā rexit
vicariatu.

1487

* Mr. T. Crofton Croker pointed out to me a curious instance of a mistake in a date inscribed in the Roman numerals. In Smith's "History of Cork" (Ireland), it is stated that, "In throwing down some of the old walls of Castle-lehan (now called Castle Lyons), a chimney-piece was discovered with this inscription, LEHANO-CULLANE HOC FECIT MCIIII. which," adds Dr. Smith, "shews that stone buildings were much earlier in Ireland than our modern antiquaries allow them to have been." Mr. Croker observes: "This antiquarian blunder has been repeated over and over again as an argument. I went, in consequence, some twenty years ago, to look at the place, and however the mistake may have originated, made up my mind that 1504, or even 64, must have been the date of the chimney-

The first word is scarcely legible. You will find it engraved in Hutchins's *Dorset*, 1st edit. vol. ii. p. 483; and if for 'nastitur' we read 'nascitur,' we may suppose that, as there suggested, it is a memorial of Nicholas Locke, who was vicar from 1467 to 1494."

1298

On a shield in the hall of Milton Abbey, is the date 1498:—"In the abbey church at Milton there is a stone, on which, in relief, there is a W. with a crosier and a mill and ton (the device of Wm. Middleton, abbot from 1481 to 1525), with the following date beneath it:—

1512

This I presume to be 1514. On the neighbouring church of Hilton there is a stone built into the wall (with two large cursive letters, H. W., forming in another stone a part of the same inscription), inscribed with a date evidently intended for 1569, although the 5 is of an unusual form. There was," Mr. Bingham observes, "a Henry Williams, lessee of this manor, tem. Eliz., whose father died 1559, and his elder brother 1568, but of his own death I can find no date."

It is important to register as many of these early dates as we can discover; all yet found confirm the opinion that the arithmetical figures did not begin to

piece. It was probably given in Roman numerals, the *D* being reversed, and of the four *IIII*, one being most probably the down-stroke of the *C*, as the Irish philomaths term such forms; so that the real reading would be 1503. But, alas for Irish dates! all this is conjecture, as the chimney-piece in question has been broken up to make a road."

be in general use for inscriptions in this country till towards the end of the fifteenth century.

Monsieur Chasles communicated to me a cast of a date on a stone in the upper part of the tower of Chartres cathedral, which is to be read apparently 1154; but the forms of the figures are evidently much more modern than that date.

11h4



XVII.

REMARKS ON AN IVORY CASKET OF THE
BEGINNING OF THE FOURTEENTH
CENTURY.

IT is hardly necessary to speak to our readers of the value to the archæologist of ancient pictorial representations. They tell us what we could not learn from other records; they do more than written descriptions,—they place the people of past ages before our eyes, in actual life,—and they introduce us to those minutiae of manners and sentiment which all other classes of historical monuments omit. How much light has been thrown on the manners of the Etruscans and Greeks at a very remote period by the beautiful pictures on their pottery! And how little should we know of ancient Egypt without the scenes which its people caused to be painted on their temples and tombs. So it is with Europe during that long and interesting period known as the middle ages, which has left us a mass of pictorial monuments, more numerous, and more varied in character, than those of Rome, Greece, or Egypt. As these pic-

tures are attached to various classes of articles, which were appropriate to different ranks, professions, ages, or sexes, we are enabled to arrange the subjects and study them in those classes so as to make ourselves familiar, in some degree, with the peculiar sentiments and pursuits of each.

In the earlier times of the middle ages the fine arts were to a great extent monopolized by the clergy, and applied chiefly to sacred purposes. For some centuries, even in miniatures, comparatively few manuscripts were illuminated except Bibles, and Psalters, and Service-books, which are valuable chiefly as illustrations of Christian iconology. Until the thirteenth century, that class of illuminated manuscripts still predominated. The period last mentioned,—the thirteenth century,—witnessed a great development of the intelligence of the middle ages, the effects of which spread through all classes of society, and which was particularly visible in the new classes of subjects on which the artist exercised his talents. It was about this time that the sculptured seats came into vogue, by which the carver introduced into the churches those burlesque pictures which illustrated the occupations of every-day life. In the thirteenth century, the illuminators, or painters, worked no longer for the church alone. They painted walls for princes and nobles, and they illuminated manuscripts on a great variety of subjects for the use of knights and ladies. The subjects which had at this period most interest for the higher ranks of society, and more especially for the ladies, were the various incidents of that extensive class of literature—the mediæval romances. These we shall trace on a variety of domestic articles of this period appropriated to the use of the female

members of the baronial household, carved in ivory, or wood, or other material; and they appear more especially on those curious and elegant caskets which are by no means uncommon in great collections of mediæval antiquities, and of which we had the opportunity of examining a very remarkable specimen, then in the possession of the late Mr. Seth W. Stevenson, F.S.A., of Norwich. It is distinguished by the beautiful style of its execution; and the character of the workmanship, the costume of the figures, and other circumstances, lead us to ascribe it to a date not later than the earlier part of the fourteenth century. The part of it which first and chiefly attracts attention is its pictorial embellishments, and to this I intend to confine my remarks.

The particular description of these pictures will be rendered more intelligible and popular by a few general remarks on the class of literature to which they relate. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to remind the reader, that the word *romance*, the meaning of which is now restricted to works of fiction, referred originally to the language only in which they were written. *Lingua Romana*, the Roman tongue, was the name which, in the middle ages, was applied to all the languages which were derived directly from the Latin, such as French, Anglo-Norman, Italian, Provençal, or Spanish. A *romans* (*Romanus liber*) was a book written in any one of these languages, and as during this period they were used chiefly in writing those peculiar compositions which we are still in the habit of calling romances, it became common to quote for authorities in such compositions the *romans*, or book written in the Roman language, until the word, at a much later period than

that of which we are more especially treating of, began to be taken in its present signification, and in which I shall always use it in the course of the following observations.

The subjects of the mediæval romances were derived from various distinct sources. Some were taken from the old traditions of the people among whom they were composed, and these form perhaps the largest and most important class; they are certainly the earliest in the date of their formation. Two large and very important cycles ran through the neo-latin or romane languages, and were afterwards transferred to German, English, and other tongues. One of these, grouped round the kings of the Carolingian race, was peculiar to the Franks, and its various romances were generally known under the title of *chansons de geste*, the meaning of which is perhaps best rendered in modern English by the term *historical romances*; the other cycle has for its heroes the supposed British king Arthur and his knights. The first of these cycles, which is exceedingly voluminous, having its scene at a period the events of which belonged to comparatively true history, had far less of the marvellous in its construction, and was almost entirely occupied with the description of warlike expeditions. The story of the expedition into Spain, and the disaster of Roncesvaux, appears to have been the only fragment of it ever popular in England. The cycle of king Arthur, which was, from its subject, much more English, having a foundation which partook far more of the really mythic character, was devoted almost entirely to scenes of love and gallantry,—the chivalry of the chamber and the tournament.

As the influence of these compositions became more general and extensive, the composers began to aim at variety, and then they sought foreign subjects, and scrupled not to borrow them from ancient, and even from Scripture, history. Thus we have the romance of Alexander, the romance of Troy, the romance of Jason, that of Eneas, and a multitude of similar subjects. Gradually the writers became more inventive, and then we find allegorical and mystical romances, a class of which the grand type was the famous Romance of the Rose, in which the progress of the soft passion was allegorized in a manner the most original and extraordinary.

From the twelfth to the sixteenth century the literature of the ladies was especially and universally one of love and gallantry, and of this the casket under our consideration, as certainly designed for a lady's use, is a very interesting example. History shows us, on one hand, how essentially the subjects engraved on it were congenial to the education of the fair sex during the middle ages, and, on the other hand, how much influence they exerted on its morals and fate. I will endeavour to illustrate this by the description of the subjects themselves, and I shall take them rather in the order indicated by the history of romantic literature, than in that in which they appear on the casket.

There were two very remarkable branches of the romantic cycle of king Arthur, which enjoyed an extraordinary popularity during the middle ages; one related the love adventures of Lancelot and Arthur's frail queen, Guenevra,—the other, those of Tristan and the fair Isoude, the queen of king Mark of Cornwall. It was the passion portrayed under its dif-

ferent causes and circumstances; in one case influenced by the personal accomplishments and temperament of the individuals; in the other, by a power the belief in which formed a portion of the superstitions of the western people before their conversion to Christianity, and which still weighed heavy upon their faith—that of fate. Most of our readers will know the story of Tristan: he was sent over to Ireland to fetch home Mark's betrothed queen, Isoude, who brought with her an enchanted potion which she was to drink with her husband, and which had the virtue of creating an everlasting love between the persons who first pledged each other in it; by a fatal error, the lady and Tristan drank the potion in their passage from Ireland, and, although she became king Mark's wife, her love had thus been irrevocably disposed of.

There is an incident in the romance of Lancelot which appears to have had so peculiar an attraction for the romance readers of the thirteenth century, that one of the celebrated poets of that period, Chretien de Troyes, made it the subject of a separate poem, entitled *La Charette*, or *The Cart*. A "felon" king, Brandemagus, had carried away queen Guenevra as his prisoner; and her lover, Lancelot, who arrived at court too late to defend her, set out in her pursuit. An accident deprived him of the use of his horse, and in his distress he asked for information of a deformed dwarf, who was leading a cart, and who assured him that he knew which way the queen had gone, and engaged, if he would ride in his cart, to carry him to his mistress. It appears that, at this time, none but condemned criminals ever rode in carts, or, at least, those who had become subjected to

some terrible disgrace,* and it was only his extreme eagerness to overtake the queen which induced Lancelot reluctantly to accept the dwarf's offer. On his road he was met by Gawayne, who was highly scandalized at his friend's position, but they continued their route together until they came to the castle of a lady, who came out with her damsels to receive Gawayne with honours, while Lancelot was hissed and pelted by the menials. Through the intercession of Gawayne, who explained his friend's situation, the lady was, with great difficulty, induced to extend her hospitality to Lancelot, who, after all, was treated with the utmost disrespect. Next morning, Lancelot having been furnished with a horse and spear, he set out with Gawayne, and finding two roads which led to the castle of Gaihon, in Brandemagus's kingdom of Goire, whither they knew that monarch was conveying his captive, they separated in order that each should take a different path. After meeting with several disagreeable adventures, most of them arising from his untoward journey in the cart, Lancelot at length came to a wide river, which he was obliged to pass by means of a bridge formed of an immense and sharp-edged sword. Having reached the other side in safety, he perceived a "vilain" approaching, who led two lions, with which he was compelled to fight;† but finding that his strokes pro-

* A celui temps estoit si laide chose de carete, que nus ne seist dedens que toutes lois et toutes honors n'eust perdues; et quant on voloit un homme tolir honor, si le faisoit-on monter en une charrette, et pus le faisoit-on mener par la vile, et y estoit tant que de tous estoit veus, ne jà en nulle vile tant fust grans ne jeust c'une nuit.—*Romance of Lancelot*, Brit. MS. Addit. No. 10,293, fol. 182, v^o.

† Quant il vint à terre, il s'est assis à chevauchons, et sache



2



6



9

Drawn & Engraved

duced no effect, he drew forth the ring which had been given him by the lady of the lake, and then his opponents disappeared, and he learnt that it was all enchantment. After this he reached the object of his search; but the adventure of the cart, which was known also to Guenevra, produced a quarrel and temporary separation between the queen and her lover.

The incidents of this story will easily be recognized in the four compartments of the back of the casket, here numbered from 9 to 12. No. 11 is evidently intended to represent Lancelot in the cart; perhaps the lion's head was introduced by a mistake of the carver, who ought to have introduced here the dwarf. No. 12, perhaps, represents the lady of the castle and her damsels, looking on Lancelot and his cart with feelings of shame. In No. 10, he is passing the strange and perilous bridge; and No. 9 represents his encounter with the lions. Some attributes in these figures are not easily explained from the romance, and they may have been taken from another version of it. Perhaps the spears and sword-blades issuing from the clouds are intended to indicate that it is all the work of enchantment.

We thus see that the romance of Lancelot (which, I may observe, was the foundation of the later romance of the Mort Arthur), has its representative on our casket. We shall find the other grand love romance, that of Tristan, figuring there too.

In the course of their adventures the two lovers had given each other a rendezvous by night under a tree in king Mark's orchard. The king, informed of

l'espée, et met l'escu par devant son vis, et apele les lyons qui jà estoient descayné, et il acorent, si li rendent grant assaut.—
Lancelot, ib. fol. 196, v^o.

their intentions by a spy, concealed himself in the tree to be a witness of his wife's infidelity. The night happened to be moonlight, and, as the queen approached the spot, she beheld the shadow of her husband's face in a fountain under the tree, before she had said anything to criminate herself. She made her lover understand their danger, and their conversation took such a turn as convinced the king that Isoude and Tristan had been unjustly slandered.*

This scene is represented in the compartment of one side of the casket, marked No. 6, and there are circumstances about it which would seem to show that the carver was following a model the subject of which he did not perfectly understand. There is something original in the substantial manner in which the shadow of the king's face is represented; but, if we look closer, we shall see that, while the real substantial king Mark in the tree is represented as a beardless youth, his shadow in the water possesses a beard of fair dimensions. The carver has either taken the beard in the substance above for part of the tree, or he transformed a part of the water beneath into a beard for the shadow.

I am inclined to think that our casket presents another subject taken from the romance of Tristan. On one occasion, Isoude was obliged to clear herself

* This incident is described in one of the fragments of the romance of Tristan, published in Michel's Collection, vol. i. page 1, which opens imperfectly in the middle of the scene. It will be found in the early English romance, Scott's "Sir Tristrem," fyfte ii. stanzas 86 to 95. It may be observed, that sir Walter Scott has erroneously printed the name Ysonde throughout the poem: it is in Latin *Isolda*; in Anglo-Norman and old French, *Isolde* and *Isoude*.

by an oath taken upon the holy relics, to visit which she had to pass a river. Tristan came there in the disguise of a beggar, and was employed to carry his mistress over the water, and a pretended accident enabled her to avoid perjury by an equivocation, easily enough explained by the picture, for she swore, that no man had ever been between her legs except her husband, king Mark, and the beggar-man who carried her over the water. The compartment, marked No. 4, appears to represent Isoude carried on the shoulders of the pretended beggar. I will only remark, that this seems to be the way in which gentlemen carried ladies in the middle ages.

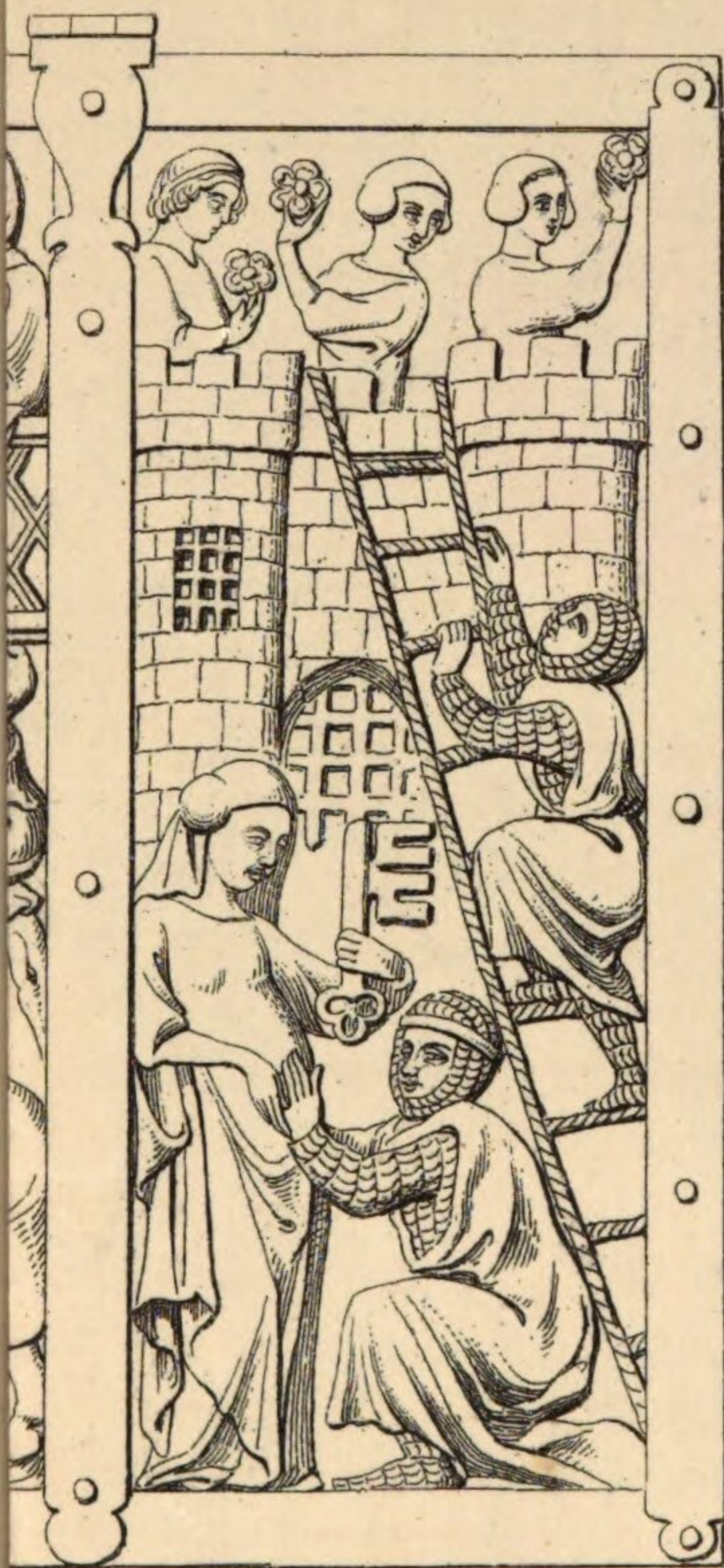
The other two classes of romances to which I have alluded, also find their representatives on this casket. The romance of Alexander the Great, with its various branches, enjoyed great popularity during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and some of its incidents gave rise to separate poems or tracts. Several of these relate to the great monarch's instructor, Aristotle. One division of the romance, and no small one, related to the monstrous animals the conqueror of India was said to have met with in his travels, and a tract in which Aristotle is made to describe these monsters, had an extensive influence on the science of natural history as it was taught in the middle ages. But the philosopher and his pupil were made to figure in a story of a more amusing character.

Love and gallantry appear to have been the grand occupation of the ladies in all grades of society during the middle ages, and the laxitude of mediæval manners allowed of a degree of licence which we can now with difficulty conceive. If this procured for the fair, on one hand, the devotion and service of the gentler



class of poets, it exposed them, on the other, to the attacks of the satirist and moralist, and these were often bitter and coarse. But the victims found their revenge in a number of stories in which the wisest philosophers and greatest sages were humbled beneath the irresistible sway of beauty. One of these stories related to Alexander and his teacher, and was in the thirteenth century made the subject of a little poem by a trouvère named Henri d'Andeli, which bears the title of the *Lai d'Aristote*.

Alexander, according to this romantic story, had a very beautiful Indian princess for his mistress; and her charms were so powerful, that the king neglected not only the lessons of his teachers but the counsels of his ministers. At last, Aristotle took an opportunity of expostulating so warmly with his royal pupil, that for a time Alexander absented himself from the society of the princess. The latter at length pressed her lover to tell her the cause of his apparent coldness, and he made a full confession. The lady was resolved to have her revenge; she clad herself one morning in a loose dress, gave herself her most tempting airs, and placed herself in the way of the philosopher, who, in spite of his age and wisdom, was suddenly seized with the most violent passion, and pressed earnestly for her love. The princess refused to listen to him unless he first consented to place himself on his hands and knees, submit to a saddle and bridle, and in that position to allow her to ride round the garden on his back. He agreed to her terms, and, in the midst of her ride, Alexander, who had been made privy to the plot, suddenly showed himself from a window, and rebuked his wise instructor for his folly. The moral of the story taught,



by F.W. Fairholt F.S.A.

that none were exempt from love's power, not even those who were so eager to speak of it with disrespect.

The compartments on the front of the casket contain allusions to the romance of Alexander, and to the Lay of Aristotle. In the first, marked No. 2, Aristotle is employed in teaching his pupil. The next (No. 3.) represents the subject of the lay. The allusion in the compartment No. 5, is more doubtful. It has been suggested to me that it represents a scene in the romance of Alexander, in which that monarch, in the course of his Indian campaign, was made to descend to the bottom of the sea in a glass globe, in order to survey the wonders of the deep. Perhaps it is Alexander's globe which is here descending among the sea nymphs. But I am inclined to think it may be a mere ordinary representation of nymphs bathing in a fountain.

The allegorical romances have their representative in the subject on one end of the casket (No. 8), and perhaps also in the larger subject which covers the lid. The first is probably taken from the *Romance of the Rose*, and seems to represent Danger consenting to receive the lover into the tower in which Belaccueil is shut up. It would take more time than is at present at our disposal, to give such an analysis of this romance as would explain the story.

The large figure on the lid represents the attack upon, and defence of, the castle of love. The weapons, it will be seen, are roses, with one exception, that of love himself, who makes use of his arrows. The tournament in the middle is a part of the subject, which was one of great popularity in the age to which this relic belongs, and is frequently found repre-

sented on articles used by the ladies. It appears, indeed, that among the imaginative Provençals of the warm south, where these love-allegories were wrought into substantial pastimes, this scene of mock warfare was not unfrequently put into actual practice. Such a scene is recorded as having been acted at Vincenzo in 1216; a wooden castle was built, defended by ladies dressed in magnificent robes, and attacked by knights. Flowers were the only missiles they were permitted to use. A Provençal poet of the same age, Rambaud de Vaqueiras, has described, in one of his lyrics, the ladies as carrying on this counterfeit war, and building imitations of castles—

“Truan mala guerra
Sai volun comensar
Donas d'esta terra
E vilas contrafar;
En plan o en serra
Volon ciutat levar
ab tors.”

That is, “The ladies of this land will commence here vile wicked war, and counterfeit the villains; they will raise a citadel with towers, on level ground, or on a hill.”

There remains one other subject on our casket to explain, which, if it does not belong to what we are in the custom of calling romances, is still of a romantic character. It is taken from what may be called the romance of science. The compartment No. 7 represents the well-known story of the fabulous unicorn—the fiercest of animals—which yet became tame when in the presence of a pure maiden; and it was only under these circumstances that it was ever killed by hunters. This subject, involving a beautiful allegory, was a favourite one, and is found in innu-

merable paintings and sculptures. It is rightly placed here among subjects which relate almost entirely to love.

Thus, in tracing the various subjects represented on this beautiful casket, we are throwing new light on the manners and sentiments of a remote period, but one which can never fail to have an interest for the historian. The knowledge of manners and sentiments is a very important portion of history itself; while by this same monument we are gaining a new insight into the history of literature,—one which shows us the influence which that literature had on the character of the age. It becomes thus a speaking picture of the past. The reader will no doubt remember that singular illustration of the influence of one of the very romances pictured on this casket, furnished by the immortal stanzas of Dante, where the poet describes his meeting with the shades of the two lovers Francesca and Paolo de Rimini. The lady, at the request of the poetic trespasser on the regions below, gives the following account of her temptation:—"There is no greater grief," she is made to say, "than to remember in one's misfortune the past period of happiness; and your teacher (Virgil) knows it well. But if thou hast so great a desire to know what was the first root of our love, I will imitate him who weeps and speaks at the same time. We were reading one day for pastime the adventures of Lancelot, how he was caught with love; we were alone, and without any distrust. Many times this reading made our eyes meet and our cheeks change colour; but it was one single passage which overcame us. When we read of the soft smile of his mistress smothered by the kiss of the lover, this one

here, who will never be separated from me, kissed me on the mouth, all trembling; the book and its writer were for us a Gallehaut; that day we read no more."

"Ed ella a me: Nessun maggior dolore,
 Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
 Nella miseria; a ciò sa il tuo dottore.
 Ma se a conoscer la prima radice
 Del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto,
 Farò come colui che piange e dice.
 Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
 Di Lancillotto, come amor lo strinse:
 Soli eravamo e senza alcun sospetto.
 Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
 Quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso:
 Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
 Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
 Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
 Questi, che mai da me non fio diviso,
 La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante:
 Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse:
 Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante."—
Dante, Infern., canto v. ll. 121—138.

But there is another point of view in which the consideration of this casket has an interest for the archæologist. We find these identical subjects, collectively or separately, figured on other caskets, and in a manner so similar, that they were evidently copied from one model. In the first place, there exists another casket, of which a rather rude engraving was given in Carter's *Ancient Sculpture*, and which is now preserved in the museum of the late sir Samuel Meyrick, which contains the same subjects, arranged in the same order, and so similar in design, that we might have supposed it the same casket, but for a variation in the subject marked No. 4. I have some reason for suspecting, that another casket in the

same collection contains some of the same subjects. A similar casket, then apparently existing in some collection in Italy, and engraved by Gori in his *The-saurus Diptychorum*,* contained the subjects taken from the romance of Lancelot, with the variation, that the three ladies are introduced in the same compartment with Lancelot in the cart, and that he is engaged, as in the romance, with two lions; and it has the siege of the castle of love as here on the lid, but the other subjects are different,—one side being taken up with subjects from the romance of Valentine and Orson. The siege of the castle of love is found, perhaps, more frequently than any of the others. In the sixteenth volume of the *Archæologia*, a plate of ivory was engraved, with a carving of this subject treated in nearly the same manner, but showing the moment in which the knights make themselves masters of the fortress and are received with open arms by its defenders; and a similar plate of ivory, with the same subject, engraved in Du Sommerard's *Album*, shows that this article was the back of a mirror. The same subject appears in one of the illuminations of the now celebrated *Loutterel Psalter*. The Lay of Aristotle, and the legend of the unicorn, are of still more frequent occurrence.

The circumstance of this repetition of the same subjects and the same designs is a curious phenomenon in the history of mediæval art. It shows that there was one common origin for certain classes of artistic productions—a principal school, from which,

* Reproduced in a plate in Ferrario, "Analisi degli Romanzi di Cavalleria," tom. ii. page 101; and in the "Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres," tom. xviii. page 322.

probably, not only the practice of the art, but the particular series of subjects to be engraved, were derived, and these were varied, perhaps, according to established rules, on which a careful comparison of such relics as that now before us may throw some light. The same practice is traced in other lines of mediæval art, and offers a question well worthy of minute examination.

I will conclude with pointing out a singular circumstance connected with this particular subject. A few of these romance subjects are found sculptured on buildings, and even in churches. The legend of the unicorn is met with on architectural monuments, and in the carved stalls of the church of Stratford-on-Avon and Chester cathedral; and the lay of Aristotle is sculptured on the masonry of the cathedral of Lyons, and on the stalls of that of Rouen. In the church of St. Pierre, at Caen, there is a capital of a column of about the date of our casket, on which are represented part of this same series of subjects, and under the same forms. It would seem as if the stone sculptor had obtained, among his other designs belonging to his own class of artists, a copy of this particular set from the artists from whose hands we derive the ivory caskets.

The curious sculptures on the column of the church of St. Pierre,* run round the capital of one of the

* The church of St. Pierre, at Caen, is an interesting edifice. The choir and part of the nave, according to the account given by the Abbé de la Rue (*Essais historiques sur la ville de Caen*, vol. i. page 94), were built at the latter end of the thirteenth century; and the rest of the nave and tower were finished in 1308. M. de la Rue, in the work just alluded to, has given bad and incorrect engravings of these sculptures, and has quite

columns of the nave. Among them we find, as here represented in our cut No. 1, the story of the unicorn,



No. 1. The Legend of the Unicorn.

which, as I have already observed, is found repeatedly on monuments of almost every description. It differs in one respect from every other example of this subject I have met with, in which the hunter uses a spear; he is here armed with a bow and arrow. A second compartment of these sculptures (see the cut, No. 2) represents other subjects, taken from what may be called the romance of science. We have on

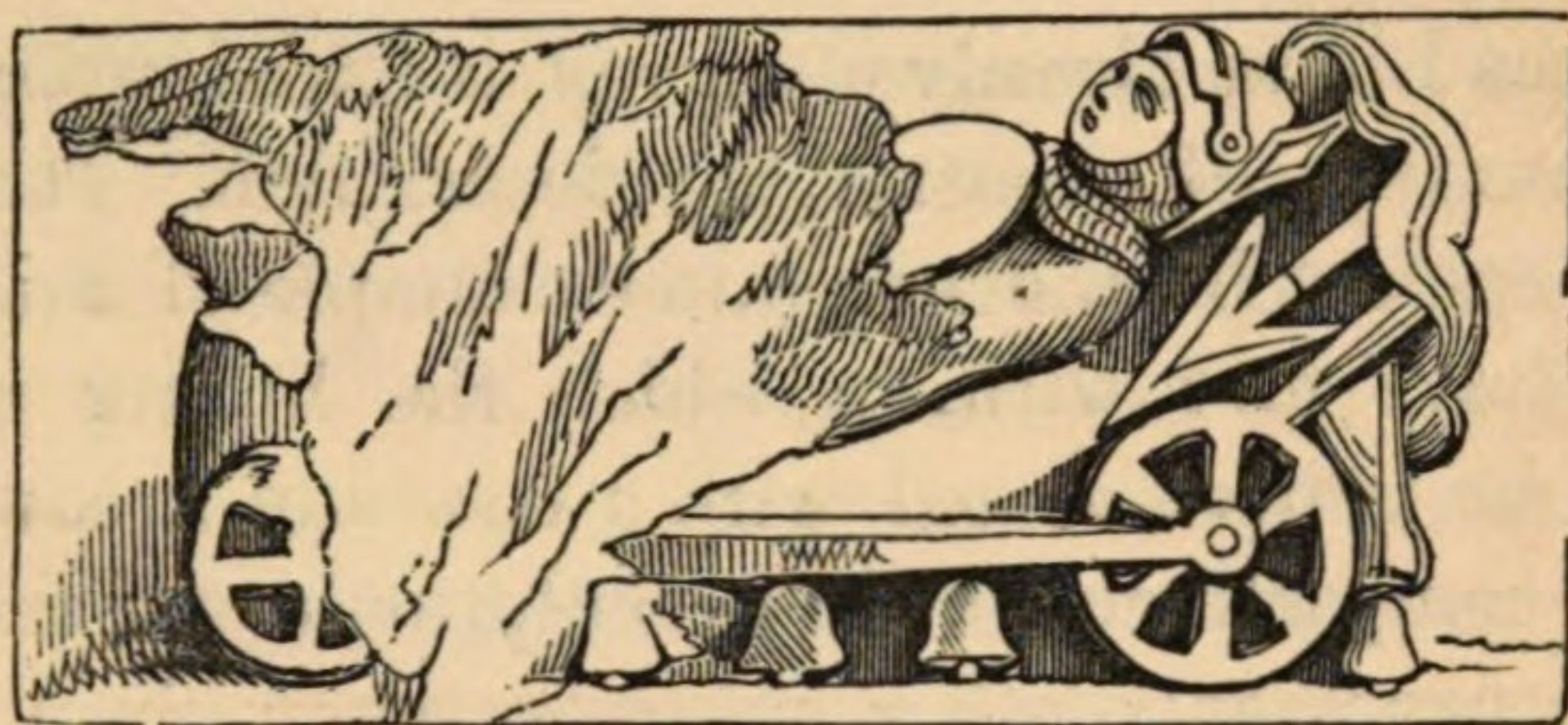


No. 2. Legends in Natural History.

one side the phoenix rising from its flames, a subject celebrated so often in mediæval literature; and on the

misunderstood and misinterpreted them. He says, that they are on the capital of "one of the last pillars of the left side of the nave," but it is not clear whether they belong to the older or to the later building.

other the equally wide-famed pelican. Both these subjects were favourite emblems with our forefathers. Between them appears a man forcing open the jaws of a lion which he has vanquished, but whether it be intended to represent the story of Samson, or a similar incident which occurs in more than one mediæval romance, I will not venture to decide. The next compartment (No. 3) represents Lancelot in the disgraceful cart. We at once observe the exact similitude in this design with those which have been pointed



No. 3. Lancelot in the Cart.

out in the caskets; the somewhat elegantly formed cart, with its wheels and bells, the manner in which the knight is reclined, and the spears and sword-blades issuing from the clouds, and which I can only explain by supposing them to represent enchantment, are the same in each. This is the more remarkable, because in the illuminated manuscripts of the romance the design is quite different. There we have a common country cart, driven by a peasant, without bells or any of the other accessories of the sculptured designs. Perhaps the bells distinguish the vehicle as a cart in which criminals were conveyed to the scaffold. The next compartment (No. 4) represents Lancelot passing the water on the terrible sword.

On the opposite bank stands (or rather, sits, and in a very grotesque posture) one of the lions, waiting his



No. 4. Lancelot on the Perilous Bridge.

arrival; and from the tower behind, the queen is seen watching the progress of her lover.

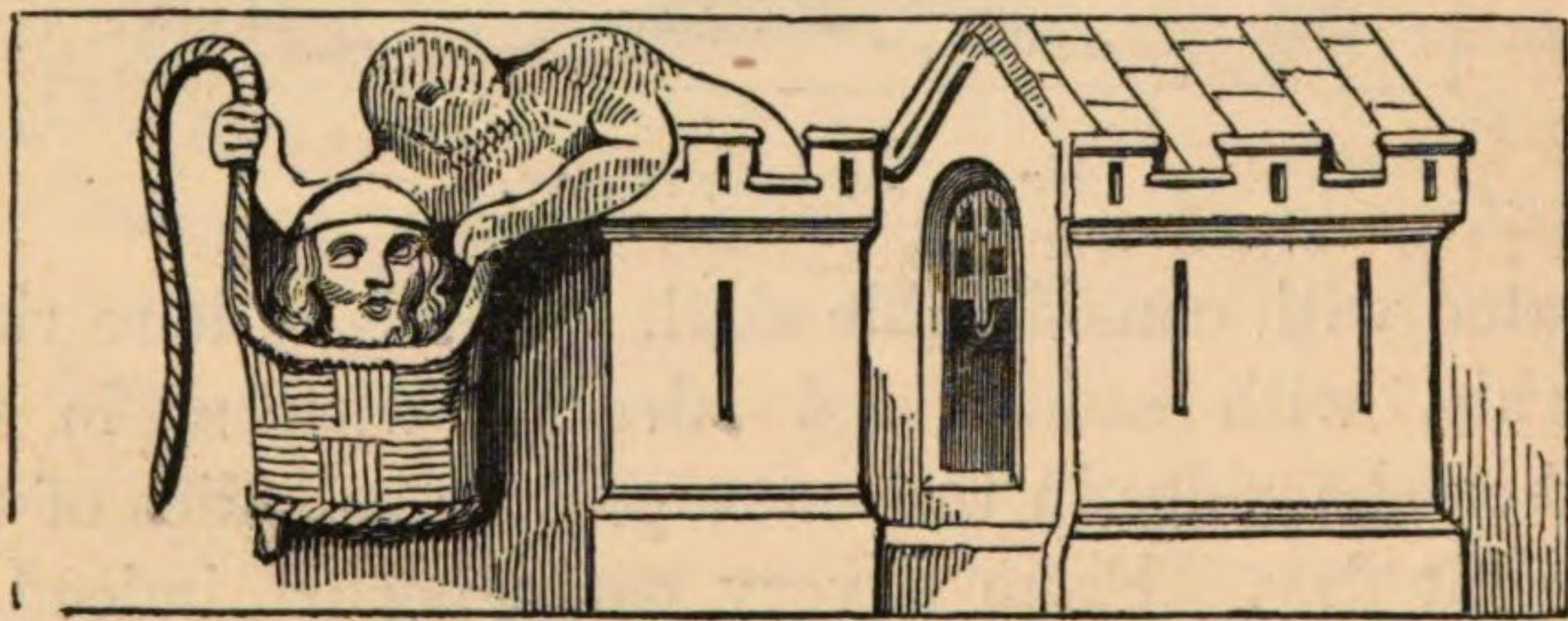
The fifth compartment of the sculptures at Caen represents the humiliation of the philosopher Aristotle, by the mistress of his royal pupil, which is



No. 5. Aristotle in love.

treated with considerable skill. The lady here rides astride, with saddle and stirrups, whereas in the casket she rides in the same posture as ladies of the present day. From a very early period, indeed,—probably from the time of the Norman Conquest, as various allusions of contemporary writers prove,—ladies appear to have ridden in either posture at will.

The last compartment is closely allied to the subject last described, but it introduces us to a new romance, and is not found represented upon any other early monument with which I am acquainted. The romance of the Saint Graal forms one of the same series as that of Lancelot; it represents a kind of wild romantic account of the carrying of the Gospel to the west. Among one of the episodes is a legend, which does not appear to have belonged originally to the romance, relating to the physician Hippocrates, or, as he was called in the middle ages, Ypocras. The physician came to Rome to the court of "Cæsar Augustus," and gained that emperor's special favour by the miraculous cure of his favourite nephew. The Ypocras of the fable was a philosopher and magician, as well as a physician, and he lived long at the court of Rome honoured and beloved. While he was still there, a company of people from Gaul arrived at court, and with them was a maiden of surpassing beauty, who soon became an object of admiration among the Romans. Among the rest, Ypocras, in spite of his philosophy and his other sage qualifica-



No. 6. Ypocras in the Basket.

tions, became desperately enamoured of the Gallic maiden, and he seized every opportunity of pressing

his suit. The maiden, in order to turn the wise philosopher to ridicule, encouraged his advances, and at last she agreed to admit him by night into her chamber, which was situated in a tower of the palace. She promised to let down a basket with a cord from the summit of the tower, and to raise him in it to her window, as the surest method of obtaining access to her unobserved. At the time appointed, the philosopher, true to his promise, came to the foot of the tower, found the basket, placed himself in it, and shook the string, as the signal that he was ready. The lady and her female attendant immediately pulled the basket up to near the summit of the tower, where it was impossible for the philosopher to get out, and there left him hanging during the following day, an object of derision to the whole population of Rome. The disgrace was great, as to be thus exposed in a basket was at that time the usual punishment for some very grievous misconduct. Ypocras subsequently executed a cruel vengeance on the author of his disgrace, which it is not necessary here to relate.*

The compartment of the Caen sculptures just alluded to (see cut No. 6), represents, in a not very artistical manner, the Gallic maiden, at the summit of the tower, drawing up Ypocras in the basket. It

* This same story, altered in some of its details, and with altogether a different conclusion as far as the lady was concerned, was a little later applied to the magician and philosopher Virgil (for such was the character which the bard of Mantua assumed in the middle ages), and it formed a chapter in the old legendary history, called the "Life of Virgil." As told of Virgil, the story was very popular, as it is often alluded to in the popular writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

was appropriately placed by the side of the story of Aristotle ; both legends were used in the middle ages by the advocates of the ladies, to throw discredit on the pretended sages who professed to despise their charms and bid defiance to the power of love.





XVIII.

ON THE CARVINGS OF THE STALLS IN
CATHEDRAL AND COLLEGIATE
CHURCHES.



THE successive visits of the British Archaeological Association to Winchester, Gloucester, and Worcester,—which places, as well as some of the churches in their vicinity, all present remarkable specimens of the carved stalls so generally found in the cathedral and collegiate churches of this and other countries,—drew more than once the attention of its members to these interesting monuments of mediæval art. These stalls were, in fact, those especially appropriated to the members of the collegiate body; and the seats, instead of being fixed and immoveable, turn upon hinges, and when turned up, the *under* side exhibits a mass of sculpture, arranged according to a regular and unvarying plan, in which the workmen and artists have exhibited their skill and imagination in a very remarkable manner. It is difficult to say how this arrangement of the seats originated, and what was the reason of their being thus adorned; but

as they are invariably found under the circumstances just mentioned, they appear to have been considered as an indispensable part of an ornamentation of a collegiate church. Several conjectural explanations of these seats have been offered, the popular opinion, however, being that they were turned up during a part of the service when the clergy were not allowed to be seated; but that out of pity to the aged or infirm, they were allowed to rest themselves against the bracket over the sculpture, which afforded a support without allowing them actually to be seated. For this reason, it is said, they received in France the title of *misericordes* (still preserved among the French archæologists) and *patiences*; while our English antiquaries generally call them *misereres*.* Why, however, this particular class of sculptures, seldom found (except at an early period) in any other part of the church, should have been appropriated especially to these seats, is a question to which I am not aware that any satisfactory solution has yet been found.

It is to these sculptures alone that the present notice, very brief in proportion to the real interest of the subject,† will be devoted. These sculptures

* Ducange has, under the word MISERICORDIA, the explanation, "Sellulæ, erectis formarum subselliis appositæ, quibus stantibus senibus vel infirmis *per misericordiam* insidere conceditur, dum alii stant, Gallis *misericordes* vel *patiences*. S. Willelmi Consuet. Hirsaug. l. ii. cap. 2. 'Primum in ecclesia quamdiu scilla pulsatur ante nocturnos, super *misericordiam* sedilis sui, si opus habet, quiescit.'"

† Very little has been written on the subject of these sculptures, and, considered as mere gross representations, they have been much neglected, and a great number of them have been suffered to be destroyed. A few were engraved by Carter, in

range in date from the thirteenth century to the age of the Reformation, and are distinguished by various degrees of excellence. Sometimes they are very rude, but more commonly, like the illuminations in some manuscripts, they possess a considerable share of artistic skill. Found on the continent, as well as in England, the general character of the subjects is so uniform, that we might almost suppose that the carvers throughout Europe possessed one regular and acknowledged series of working patterns. Yet there is a great variety in the details of the subjects and in the manner of treating them. It may be observed, that the ornamentation consists generally of a principal subject, immediately supporting the bracket, and of two side lobes or cusps springing from the latter. These side ornaments consist sometimes of mere foliage, attached to the bracket by a stalk; sometimes they are grotesques, or separate subjects, having little or no connection with the central piece; while they are often a dependent and important part of the story represented under the bracket. Writers of vivid imaginations have given them no less variety of interpretations. Some have conceived them to be satirical attacks directed by the monks at one another, or at the secular clergy; while others have imagined that these strange and grotesque figures embodied in allegorical form the deepest mysteries of our holy faith. Each of these opinions was equally far from the truth. In all probability neither the designers nor the carvers were monks, although it is evident that they were men of a certain degree

his "Ancient Sculpture." The very interesting series in the cathedral at Rouen were engraved and described by M. Langlois.

of education, and well acquainted with the popular literature of the day, the different classes of which are here represented in a pictorial form. In this point of view they are valuable as artistic monuments, while they illustrate in a most interesting degree the manners and habits of our forefathers.

One of the most popular branches of the popular literature alluded to was the science of natural history, in the shape in which it was then taught. The treatises on this subject were designated by the general title of Bestiaries (*bestiaria*), or books of beasts; they contained a singular mixture of fable and truth, and the animals with which we are acquainted in our ordinary experience stood side by side with monsters of the most extraordinary kind. The accounts, even of the more common and well known animals, trespassed largely on the domain of the imagination, and therefore much more extraordinary were the fables relating to those of a doubtful or of an entirely fabulous character. I may mention, as an example, the unicorn—according to mediæval fable the fiercest and most uncontrollable of beasts. A stratagem, we are told, was necessary to entrap the unicorn. A beautiful virgin, of spotless purity, was taken to the forest which this animal frequented. The unicorn, tame only in the presence of a pure virgin, came immediately and laid its head gently and without fear in the maiden's lap. The hunter then approached and struck his prey with a mortal blow, before it had time to wake from its security. A more popular character was given to these stories by the adjunction of moralizations, somewhat resembling those which are found at the end of the fables of Æsop. The mysterious power of the maiden over the unicorn, the resurrection

of the phoenix, the generous nobleness of the lion, the craftiness of the fox, the maternal tenderness of the pelican, are capable of a multitude of mystical interpretations.

The Bestiaries, of all ages, are more universally illustrated with pictures than any other book—they seem to have contained the first science to be instilled into the youthful mind. Every one who has been in the habit of examining the sculptured stalls of which we are speaking, knows that the stories of Bestiaries are among the most common representations. On the very interesting stalls in the church

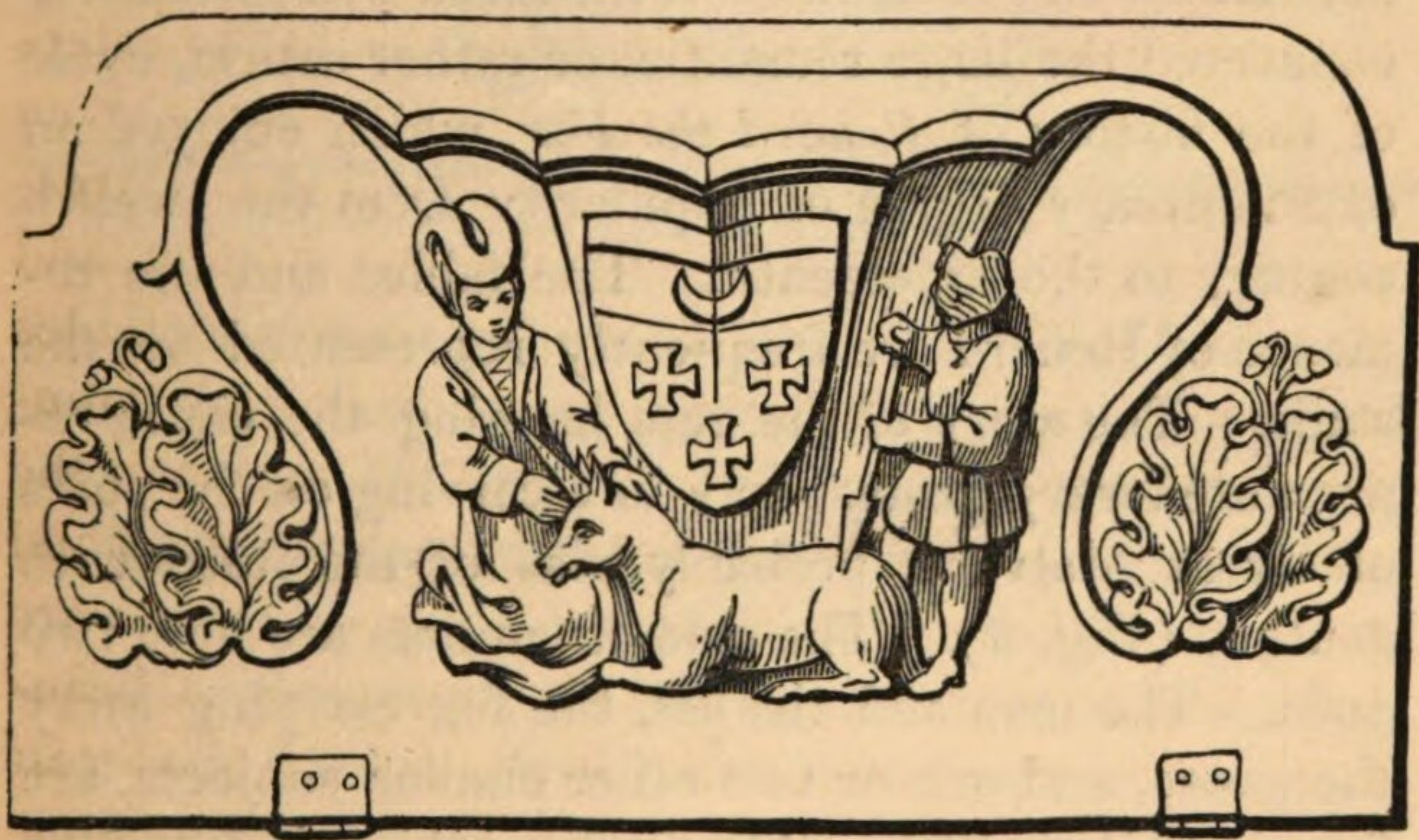


Fig. 1. From Stratford-on-Avon.

of Stratford-upon-Avon, we find the story of the maiden and the unicorn, the latter being made a more cruel sacrifice to the hunter, after having fallen a victim to the charms of beauty (Fig. 1). The style of this work seems to carry us back to the earlier part of the fourteenth century: it is not clear to whom the arms belong, but the lobes are formed of the leaves and acorns of the oak, the favourite

foliage of the Early English style of ornamentation. The pelican, the elephant, the lion, and the more ignoble monkey, have their place on the stalls at Gloucester. The fabulous objects of the natural history of the middle ages—dragons, chimeras, griffins, and the like, are much more numerous. The syren is seen on the stalls of Great Malvern.

Next after the Bestiaries, the most popular books of the middle ages—books which were pictorially illustrated with equal profusion—were the collections of Æsopean fables, known under the titles of *Ysopets* and *Avynets*, from the names of the celebrated fabulists Æsop and Avienus. With these was intimately connected the large romantic, or rather satiric, cycle of the history of *Renard the Fox*, which enjoyed an extraordinary degree of popularity from the twelfth century to the nineteenth. The fables and the romance of Renard are frequently represented on the stalls. The story of the rats hanging the cat is represented very grotesquely in a carving on the stalls of Great Malvern, probably also of the fourteenth century (Fig. 2). The side ornaments are here two owls. The man and the ass, the fox carrying away the goose, and one or two other similar subjects, are found at Gloucester. The fox preaching is found on one of the side ornaments of a stall carving in Worcester cathedral, and is not of unfrequent occurrence elsewhere.

Another class of literature, frequently accompanied with pictorial illustrations in the manuscripts, comprises the calendars or ecclesiastical almanacs, in which the domestic or agricultural employments of each month are pictured at the top or in the margins of the page. Such subjects are extremely frequent

on the carved stalls. Three stalls in the cathedral of Worcester represent men employed in mowing, reap-



Fig. 2. From Great Malvern.

ing, and sheaving the corn. Another represents the swineherd feeding his pigs, by beating down the acorns from the trees. This last is a very common subject. Scenes of hunting or hawking are also not unfrequently met with. The stall carver has given a still wider range to his imagination in representing domestic scenes,—which are very frequent, and very interesting for the light thus thrown on the popular manners of our forefathers in far distant times. A very curious example may be cited from the cathedral of Worcester, which represents a domestic winter scene (Fig. 3). A man closely wrapped up is seated beside a fire, stirring his pot; his gloves, which are remarkable for being two-fingered, as well as the expression of his features, show that he is suffering severely from the temperature. He has taken off his boots, and warms his feet by a rather close approxi-

mation to the fire. All the details of the picture are equally curious, even to the side ornaments; one of

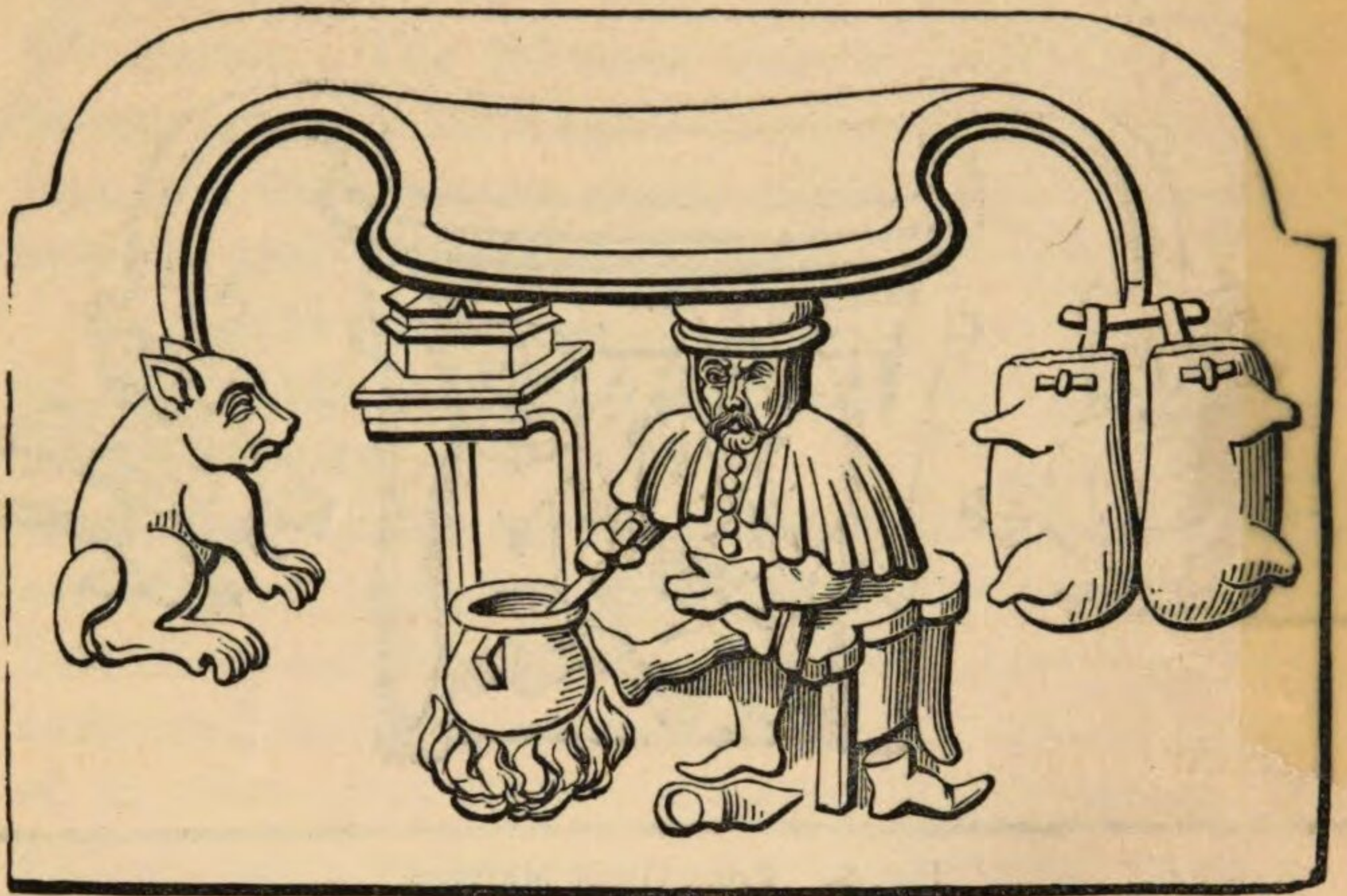


Fig. 3. From Worcester.

which represents two fitches of bacon, the winter's provision, suspended to a hook, while on the other a rather gigantic cat is basking in the warmth of the chimney. The chimney itself is not unworthy of notice.

The domestic cat is met with in other examples. On a stall from Minster church, in the isle of Thanet, an old woman, a witch-like figure, is occupied at her distaff, accompanied by two cats of grotesque appearance. One of the stalls at Great Malvern,—which, like those of Worcester, appear to be of the latter part of the fourteenth century—represents a man at his dinner. Another in the same church (Fig. 4) exhibits a woman in bed, attended by a physician. Others of this class are more grotesque and playful, representing games and pastimes. One of these here



Fig. 4. From Great Malvern.

given (Fig. 5), from Gloucester cathedral (the sculp-



Fig. 5. From Gloucester.

tures of which appear to be of the latter half of the fourteenth century), represents two boys playing with balls, and is a curious illustration of the costume of the period. The whole field is, in these stalls

at Gloucester, covered with ornamentation, and there are no side cusps. Sometimes we have very curious representations of the processes and implements of trade, commerce, and labour. The very interesting example of this class of representations here given from the church of Ludlow, in Shropshire (Fig. 6), represents two men supporting, we might almost say from

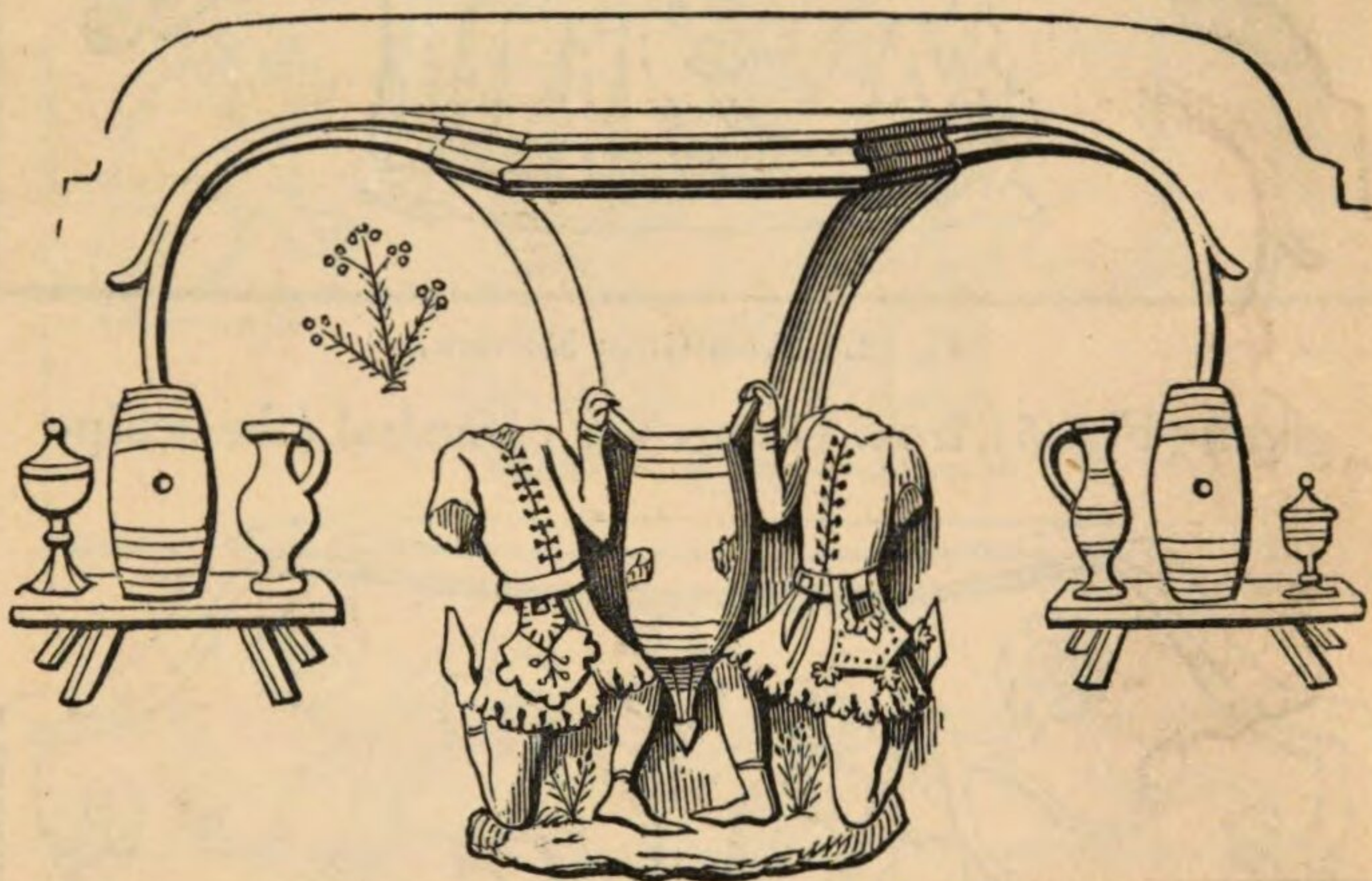


Fig. 6. From Ludlow.

their posture worshipping, the beer-barrel. Their costume, with its "dagged" borders, is of the reign of Richard II. The side ornaments here represent severally the ale-bench, with the barrel, jug, and drinking cup; the forms of which are valuable data for the archæologist. The stalls of Ludlow church have been much mutilated, and evidently with intention, for the heads, arms, and other prominent parts, have been cut off with a sharp instrument. It is a very remarkable fact, also, that there is an evident distinction of style in them, indicating two

classes of workmanship, one of which is superior in design and execution to the other. The workman to whom we owe the latter has carefully marked every one of his stalls with his sign or mark, a branch; a singularity which I do not remember to have observed elsewhere. It is exhibited in the above cut, and will be observed similarly placed in two others from the



Fig. 7. From Ludlow.

same church, given in the present article. One of these (Fig. 7) represents, we are led to suppose, the grave-digger, as the implements of his calling, with the tomb, and a hand holding up the holy-water pot, are seen in the right-hand side ornament. On one side of the middle figure are represented a barrel, a pair of clogs, a bellows, and a hammer, which might throw some doubt on the profession of the individual. The mutilation of the arms of the right-hand side figure renders it difficult to say exactly how he was intended to be occupied. Practical jokes, not always

restrained within the bounds of the delicacy of modern times, are common; and monks and nuns sometimes appear in scenes of this description, of which some curious examples are furnished by the stalls of Hereford cathedral. These stalls are of early workmanship, and the side ornaments exhibit the well-known early English oak foliage in profusion; when I saw them last, they were scattered in lamentable confusion in the church, having been taken from their places during the repairs and restorations of the building. One of them (Fig. 8), exhibits a scene from the



Fig. 8. From Hereford.

kitchen, in which a man is evidently taking liberties with the cook-maid, who has thrown a platter at his head. A subject closely resembling this is found on one of the stalls of the church of Great Malvern. These subjects are sometimes carried to a degree of indelicacy which cannot be described.

It is remarkable, and especially characteristic of

these carvings, that scriptural or religious subjects are very rare. A stall at Gloucester appears to represent the scriptural story of Sampson overcome by the courtesan Dalilah. An example of a saint's legend occurs in the representation of the story of St. George and the dragon, on a stall at Stratford-upon-Avon, the side ornaments to which are not very congruous grotesques. This particular subject, however, belongs almost as much to chivalrous romance as to sacred legend. The stories of the great mediæval romances also find a place in these representa-



Fig. 9. From Gloucester.

tions. A foreign example represents the fabulous Aristotle subdued by the charms of his patron's wife—the subject of a well-known poem—the *Lai d'Aristote*. A stall at Gloucester (Fig. 9), no doubt taken from one of the old romances of chivalry, represents a knight in combat with a giant. The same cathedral furnishes us with interesting representations of knights

tilting, and of others engaged in the chase. Subjects that may be considered as strictly allegorical are also rare; perhaps the figure of a naked man enveloped in a net, with a hare under his arm, and riding on a goat, in the stalls of Worcester cathedral, may be considered as belonging to this class. A figure of a fool riding on a goat occurs on the stalls at Gloucester, and may have a similar signification. The subjects most commonly supposed to be of this allegorical character are mere grotesques, copied or imitated from those fantastic sketches so often found in the margins of manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.

A number of very excellent examples of these burlesques are presented by the stalls of Winchester cathedral; the elegant foliage on which would bespeak the thirteenth century. In these, the bracket is supported by a small group, consisting in most cases of grotesque figures of animals or human beings, in various postures and occupations. The large side cusps, differing in this respect from all the later examples, are here the most important part of the subject. In some they consist of extremely tasteful groups of foliage, generally formed of vine leaves. Figures of children or monkeys are in some instances intermixed with the foliage. Sometimes the cusp consists of a large head or face, exhibiting strange grimaces. In one instance the two cusps represent a mermaid and a merman. In another we have a man fighting with a monster; in one we see a woman, seated apparently on a cat, and occupied with her woof; others represent musicians playing on the pipe or the fiddle; and in the one given (Fig. 10), the musicians are a pig and a sow—a young pig in

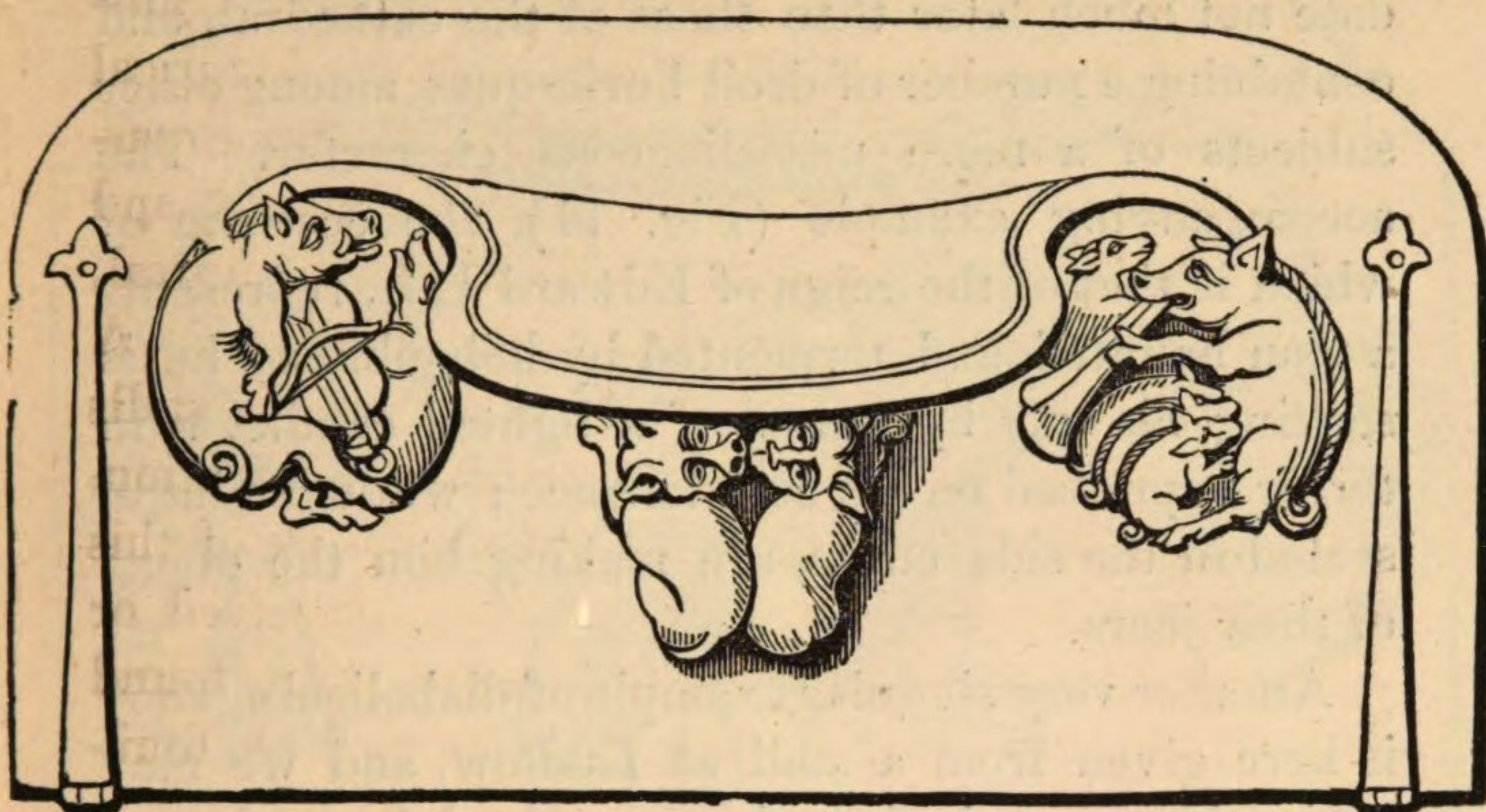


Fig. 10. From Winchester cathedral.

one instance dances to the fiddle, while in the other the maternal melody appears to have charms but for one of the offspring.

The stalls of the chapel of Winchester school also furnish a very remarkable series of sculptures, of a



Fig. 11. From the chapel of Winchester school.

date not much later than those of the cathedral, and containing a number of droll burlesques, among other subjects of a more miscellaneous character. The accompanying example (Fig. 11), the costume of which is that of the reign of Edward III., represents a man haunted and tormented by hobgoblins; he is seeking his way by means of a lighted candle, with terror impressed on his countenance; while the imps, seated in the side cusps, are making him the object of their jeers.

Another very singular example of diabolical agency is here given from a stall at Ludlow, and we may again observe on it the private mark of the workman. It is curious, because it contains an evident allusion to a scene in the mediæval mysteries or religious plays. The particular play to which I allude is that representing the last judgment, or doomsday, in which the demons are introduced dragging into hell a variety of classes of dishonest people, thus conveying a moral and satirical admonition against some of the crying sins of the day, which were most practised among, and most offensive to, the lower and middle orders of society. One of these great offenders was the ale-wife who used short measures. In the stall from Ludlow church (Fig. 12), the demon is carrying the ale-wife, with her false measure and gay head-dress, to thrust her into hell-mouth—the usual popular representation of which forms the side ornament to the right; another demon plays her a tune on the bagpipes as she is carried along. It will be observed that the head of the demon who carries the lady is broken off. A third demon, seated in the cusp to the left, reads from a roll of parchment the catalogue of her sins.

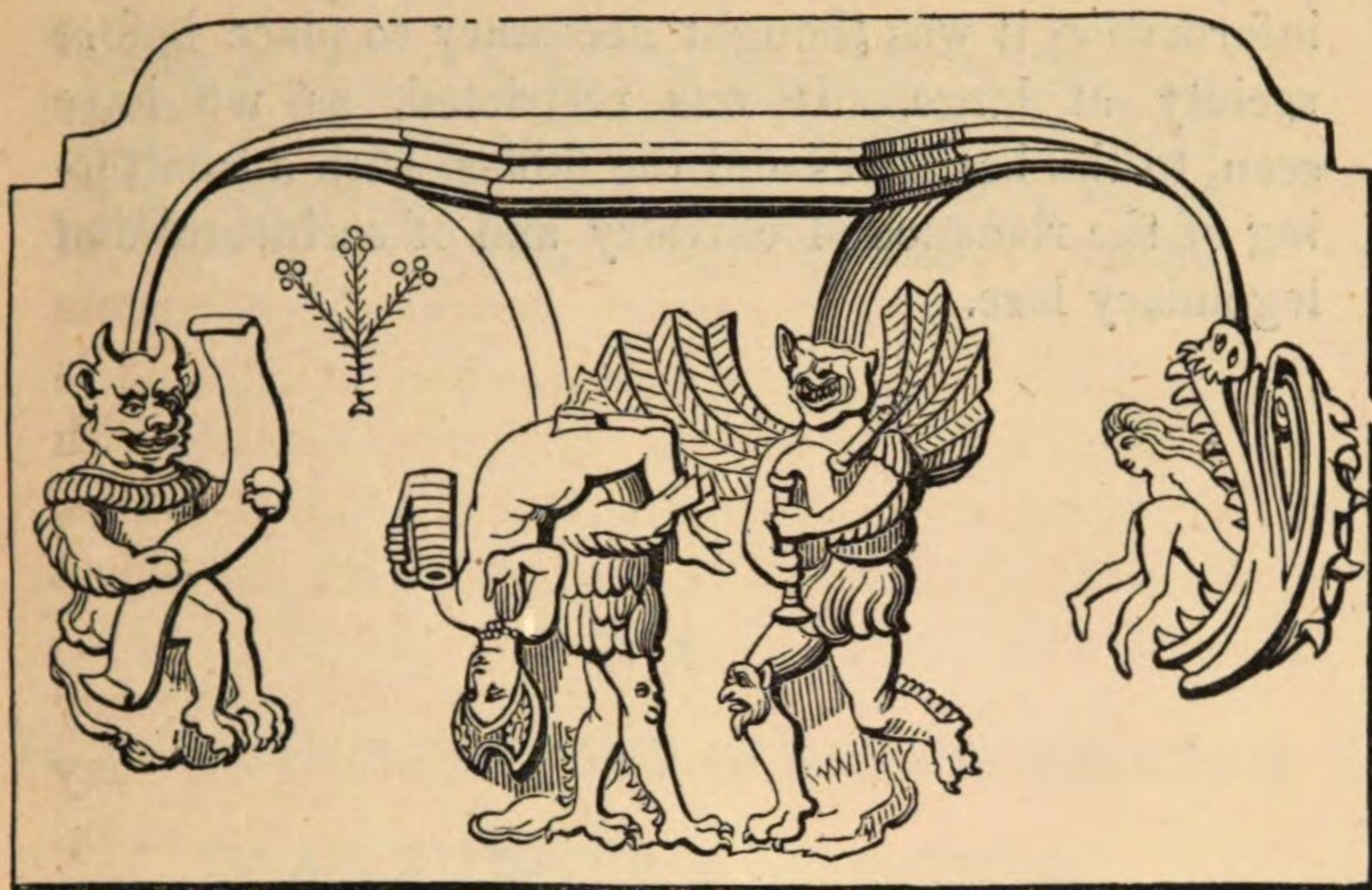
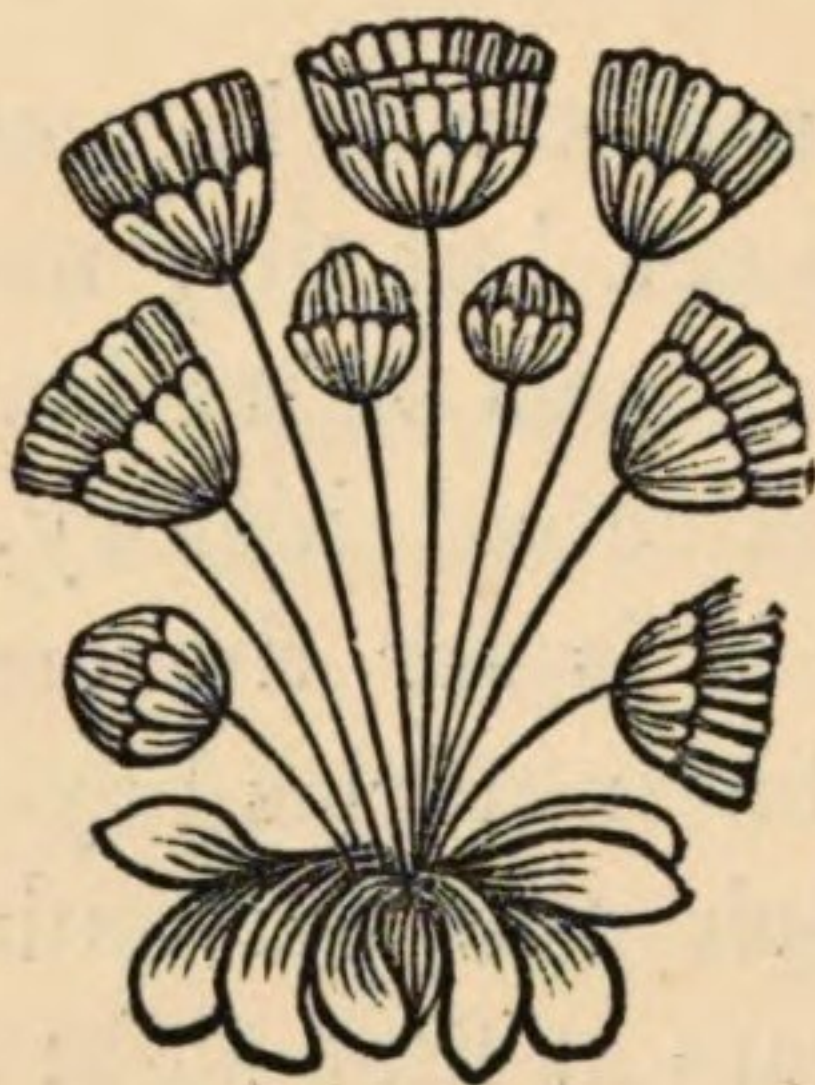


Fig. 12. From Ludlow.

These carvings are, it will be seen, not only monuments of mediæval art, but they may be looked upon as important illustrations of mediæval literature and of social and intellectual history, and they show us how necessary it is for the archæologist to extend the field of his inquiries beyond the immediate limits within which the particular subject under consideration appears at first sight to lie, as a monument of architecture, or painting, or sculpture, if he would thoroughly understand it. An extensive study of the literature of the middle ages is needful to enable the inquirer to understand the objects of art those ages produced, and indeed this is the case for all mediæval monuments, as it is for their history. The sculptured stalls, besides their value for the study of manners and costume, form a practical illustration of the kind and degree of scientific and literary

information it was thought necessary to place before society at large. It was restricted, as we have seen, to the bestiaries and the fables, with a smattering of the romance of chivalry and of scriptural and legendary lore.





XIX.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SOME QUESTIONS RELATING
TO ARCHITECTURAL ANTIQUITIES.

*Mediæval Architecture Illustrated from Illuminated
Manuscripts.—Builders at Work.*



AN example has already been given of the valuable assistance which may be derived from the illuminated manuscripts of different periods, in illustrating architectural antiquities. The details in these old pictures are not in general drawn with sufficient minuteness to enable us to derive much benefit from a comparison with existing monuments; but we learn in them the disposition and arrangements of buildings of different classes, of which there are now no perfect examples left. It has been shown, on a former occasion, that, with regard to Anglo-Saxon architecture, the drawings in manuscripts of a date anterior to the Norman conquest furnish us with data of great importance in identifying the few existing remains, which without them are extremely doubtful. The Anglo-Saxon drawings

present sufficient characteristics for our purpose. But after the conquest, when existing monuments, the dates of which are known, become more numerous, the drawings in the manuscripts have less value in this respect, and in many instances the architectural characteristics are so badly designed as to be altogether useless. But, as a compensation for this default, the manuscripts represent to us interiors and exteriors of castles and monasteries, palaces, manor houses, cottages, with street views, and the various buildings peculiar to town and country, as they stood in different ages and under different circumstances; and these are in general further explained by the descriptions in the corresponding text.

The earlier illuminated manuscripts are chiefly copies of the Scriptures, or books of a religious character, and the buildings represented in these are mostly ecclesiastical. We find little to illustrate the domestic and military architecture of the Anglo-Saxons. The same remark applies in some degree to the Anglo-Norman period; and it is not till the illuminated romances became common, in the thirteenth century, that we find many drawings of houses and castles. But there is one part of the subject which is illustrated by these illuminations at all periods when they are found, and one which cannot fail to have an interest for all readers—the occupations and the tools of the builder and mason. It would be no difficult thing to give a very numerous and perfect series of drawings of builders occupied with their labours, at every period from at least the tenth century down to the sixteenth; but I will be satisfied in the present instance with giving a few examples, in regular succession of date, although

belonging to periods separated by somewhat long intervals.

My first cut is taken from the same manuscript of the translation of part of the Scriptures by Alfrie, which has already furnished the illustrations of An-



glo-Saxon architecture (MS. Cotton, Claudius B. iv. fol. 19), and which was executed at the close of the tenth or in the earlier years of the eleventh century.

It represents the building of Babel, and is here considerably diminished from the original. The drawing is somewhat rudely executed, though not without spirit; and the workmen show as much contempt for the laws of gravitation, as the artist has exhibited ignorance of perspective. On the right, a workman is carrying the squared stones for the wall one by one up a ladder. On the left, two men are employed in raising either a large squared stone or a beam of timber to a rather singularly formed scaffold, on which another labourer is lifting the hod of mortar to the workman above. At the top a man is working on a dome with a hammer and chisel, while below him another is similarly employed on a sloping roof. Two others are working with tools of the same description at the door.

The next example is taken from the painted glass of a window in the cathedral of Chartres in France, executed in the thirteenth century. Our cut is reduced from a larger plate given in the interesting *Annales Archéologiques*, by the distinguished French archæologist M. Didron. In the right-hand compartment two masons are at work on the stones which are apparently intended to form parts of mouldings; at their feet are their squares and their compasses, and the models of the mouldings are suspended above. In the other compartment a mason is employed in equalizing the surface of a stone, with a tool which appears to have a serrated edge; and the architect is applying a plummet to ascertain if the work be accurately vertical. Above are suspended, another instrument apparently a saw, and a board on which is traced the plan of a building with four corner columns and a large clustered pier in the centre. Two

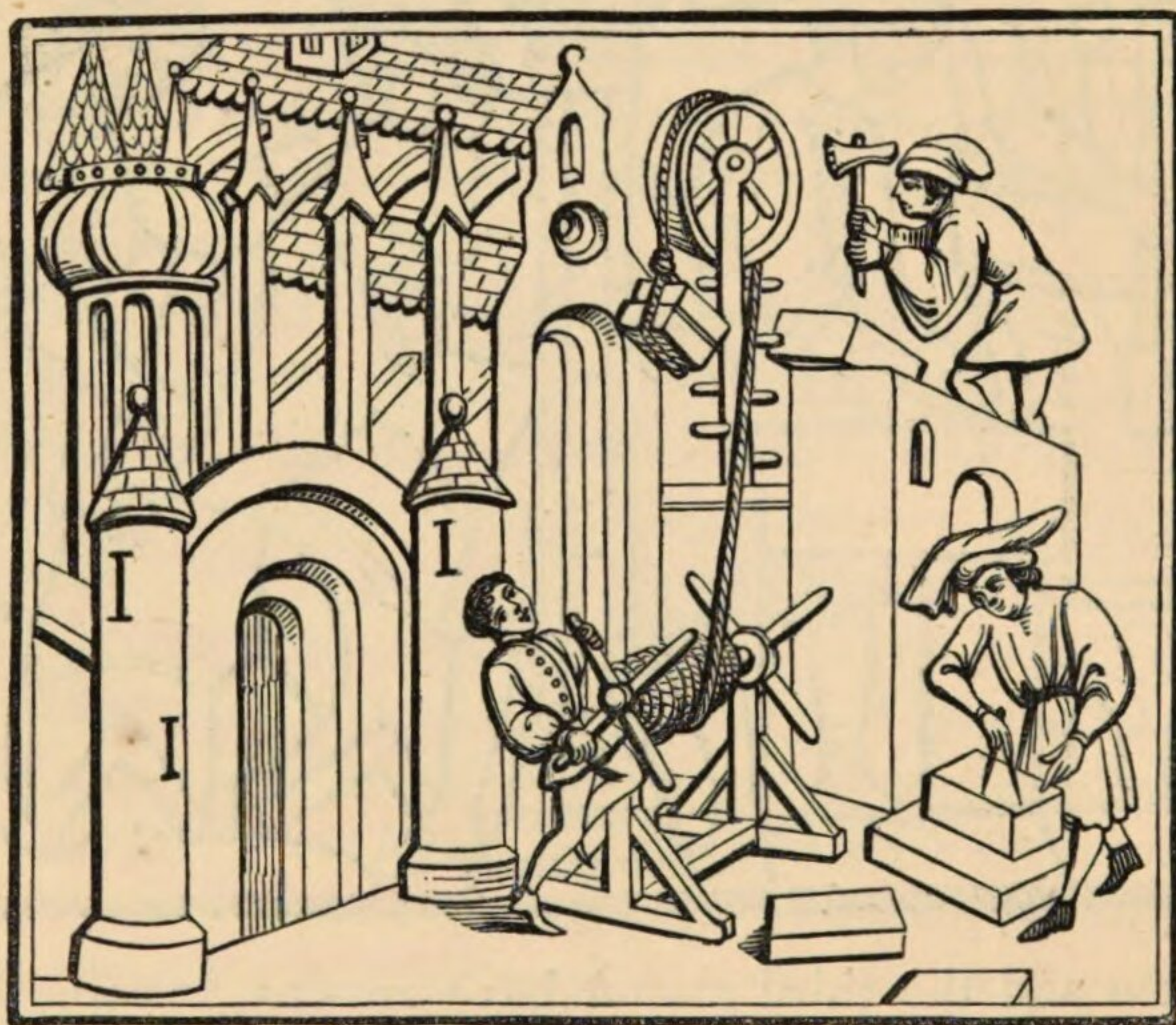
of the masons have small caps tied by a band which goes under the chin, and it is singular that both



these and the third mason have crowns, apparently of laurel. The mason without a cap has a glove on one hand. M. Didron remarks that gloves, to be presented to masons and stone-cutters, are often mentioned in old documents. In a subsequent number of his valuable *Annales*, he gives the following examples. In 1381, the Châtelan of Vallaines en Duemois bought a considerable quantity of gloves to

give to the workmen, in order "to shield their hands from the stone and lime." In October 1383, as we learn from a document of the period, three dozen of gloves were bought and distributed to the masons when they began the buildings at the Chartreuse of Dijon. At Amiens, in 1486 or 1487, twenty-two pairs of gloves were given to the masons and stone-cutters.

Our third wood-cut is taken from a manuscript of the earlier part of the fifteenth century (MS. Harl. No. 4431, fol. 111), containing the poems of Christine



de Pisan. The stones are here no longer carried up by the hands of the labourers, as in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript, but they are raised by a wheel and axle—a rather rude attempt at a crane. The mason at work on the wall is squaring his stone with a serrated tool, like that which is in the hand of one of the work-

men in the foregoing scene. The other is measuring the stone with a compass. One part of the building on which they are employed is a church, with flying buttresses. All the dresses of the men employed here differ from each other, and perhaps distinguish the different classes of the workmen.

The last example is taken from a beautifully illuminated manuscript of the latter part of the fifteenth



century (MS. Harl. No. 4376), containing an ancient history of the world, in French. Each book is headed by a large miniature, several of them representing

the building of towns and cities. Our cut gives only a portion of one of these miniatures, and is reduced in size from the original. The buildings of the town, seen in the distance, are neatly executed, and the ornamental conduit, behind the tower on which the workmen are employed, is extremely beautiful. The whole forms a very interesting picture. The crane employed here is a much more perfect machine than that exhibited in the preceding cut. The tools employed by the workmen in front differ little from those seen in the two preceding groups. The architect, with his staff in his right hand, is represented in the act of receiving his orders from the prince or duke, under whose auspices the city has been founded. The smaller cut in our margin, taken from the same



manuscript, represents a group of builders, with a trowel and hod of mortar, at work upon a tower,—not upon a chimney, as the artists proportions would have led us to suppose.

In reviewing and comparing these various representations of the same process at so widely distant periods, we are struck much less with their diversity, than with the close resemblance between both workmen and tools which continues amid the continual, and sometimes rapid, changes in the condition and manners of society. Whether this be in any measure to be attributed to the circumstance of the masons forming a permanent society among themselves, which transmitted its doctrines and fashions unchanged from father to son, it is not very easy to determine. But

it is certainly remarkable that at the period when architecture flourished most, the date of some of the richest portions of the cathedral of Chartres, the masons should be represented with crowns of laurel on their heads.

A Word on Mediæval Bridge-builders.

THE history of bridge-building in the middle ages is a subject well worthy of our attention, and diligent research would no doubt bring to light many curious documents relating to it. Most of the bridges made by the Romans were probably destroyed in the invasion of the barbarians; and, through the dark ages which followed their irruption, travelling, where the roads lay across rivers, must have been attended with many obstacles and dangers. A corporate town had generally its bridge, which was kept in repair at the expense of the townsmen. But in other places, in those troubled times, a ford, or a much rarer bridge, was often seized upon by some feudal oppressor, who established himself in the neighbourhood to plunder and ill-treat the travellers who had to pass it.

As long as the laity only were grieved, little attention appears to have been paid to these evils; but when pilgrimages became fashionable, the grievance was felt by the Church, which then used its influence for the benefit of society in establishing bridges and securing a safe passage over them. It seems not improbable that societies or lodges of bridge-builders existed at an early period, and that they were relics of the policy of Roman times; but the history of such societies is involved in great obscurity. The Church

appears to have taken them up and encouraged them in the twelfth century, and then they were endowed with a certain religious character.

The people of Avignon, in the south of France, had long felt the want of a bridge over the Rhone, when (in 1177, according to the legendary history), as the bishop was endeavouring to console the citizens assembled in the cathedral and relieve their minds from the terror caused by a solar eclipse, a poor shepherd named Benezet (latinized into Benedictus) presented himself before them, and declared that he was sent by God to build them a bridge. The bishop was incredulous, and treated the man as an imposter or a madman. But Benezet persisted in his story; and at length, to try him, the bishop ordered him to carry to the river an immense mass of rock which thirty men could scarcely move, and throw it into the torrent as the foundation stone. Benezet agreed to the trial, and in the presence of an immense multitude performed his task to their complete satisfaction. Convinced by this miracle, the citizens entered zealously upon the work; money was raised by levying a tax, and in 1188 the bridge was completed, which was so strongly built that it remained uninjured until 1662, when one of the central arches gave way, and it became a ruin.

The life, or rather legend, of St. Benezet, for his name was placed in the Romish calendar, was written long after his death, and contains several inconsistencies. Historical facts are concealed under a cloak of monkish inventions, and it is not improbable, if the truth were known, that the pretended saint was a member of some lodge of bridge-builders, and that the miracle consisted in some powerful mechanical

contrivance to lift huge masses and place them in the bed of the river. A college or religious fraternity of bridge-builders was, however, formed at Avignon, and Benezet was placed at its head. His name occurs as their prior in 1187; but it seems to be not quite clear whether this was the first foundation of the order, or whether it had existed before he offered himself to undertake the erection of the bridge. The order of bridge-builders at Avignon, with the peculiar love of punning which characterized the middle ages, were called *fratres pontificales*; and sometimes *fratres pontis* and *factores pontium*.

This fraternity of bridge-builders soon extended its influence into other parts of France, and appears to have existed in tolerable activity through the thirteenth century. It declined and became forgotten, when the extension of science and mechanical knowledge rendered its efforts no longer necessary. In 1270, the fraternity built the bridge at Bon-pas on the Durance. Among their other works were the bridges at Lourmarin between Aix and Apt, at Malemort on the Durance, and at a place called in the old Latin document *Podium sanguinolentum*. The two latter names seem to show sufficiently the dangerous character of the spots previous to the erection of the bridges. The members of this fraternity are said by some to have worn as their badge the figure of a mason's hammer on their breast. According to Ducange (Gloss. v. *fratres pontis*) their dress was a white vest with a sign of a bridge and cross of cloth on the breast.

Our information relating to these fraternities of bridge-builders is at present very unsatisfactory. It is probable that there were similar companies in other

countries, such as Italy, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, &c., as we find many bridges built in those countries during this period under the directions of ecclesiastics; but it is at present impossible to say how far they were connected with one another. It has been pointed out as rather a singular coincidence that at the same time that Benezet or Benedictus was employed in this manner in France, between 1178 and 1191, an ecclesiastic of the same name in Sweden, Benedict bishop of Skara, distinguished himself as a great bridge-builder.

A rather prolific French writer, the Comte H. Gregoire, who gave up his bishopric of Blois to take a part in the events of the great revolution, published at Paris, in a small pamphlet of seventy-two pages, 8vo., 1818, the result of somewhat extensive researches on the history of the *fratres pontificales*, under the title, *Recherches historiques sur les congrégations hospitalières des frères pontifes*. This I have not been able to consult; the British Museum appears not to possess a copy, and the only reference I can give for information on the subject in our great national establishment is to the *Allgemeine Encyclopädie* of Ersch and Gruber, article *Brückenbrüder*, from which this brief notice is partly compiled.

I will only add as a hint that I believe our national records and the archives of our cities and boroughs contain scattered materials for a very interesting history of bridge-building in England.

On the Remains of Proscribed Races in Mediæval and Modern Society, as explaining certain peculiarities in old Churches.

A VALUABLE, because a very suggestive, paper, was read at the Ethnological Society by Dr. Latham; on "The existence in the different countries of Europe of colonies of known foreign races among peoples of a different family." Dr. Latham treated only in general terms a question which admits of, and I may add requires, minute and extensive investigation in each particular country; and it would not only be interesting to trace the remains of colonies of this kind formed at different periods, but also to investigate the traces of fragments of races which are not to be in this way accounted for, and which are probably of much more remote antiquity. These two classes of questions we ourselves find at home. During the ages of feudalism, when a prince or great baron—for princes were then only superior barons—held territories in several different countries, and when wars and other causes led not unfrequently to the entire depopulation of a particular district, it was not unusual for the feudal lord to supply the exhausted population by bringing over a colony from his foreign feudal possessions, or from elsewhere, to supply the deficiency. We have a remarkable instance of this practice in the colony of Flemings, planted by king Henry I. in Pembrokeshire, and which in the time of Giraldus Cambrensis, a good part of a century afterwards, remained perfectly distinct from the surrounding populations. That writer gives us one or two traits of their manners, among which was the practice of divination by the bladebone of a sheep (especially of a ram), a superstition which,

as we learn from Guillaume de Rubruquis, existed among the Tartars in the thirteenth century. All memory of their Flemish extraction has, I believe, long disappeared among the population of the neighbourhoods of Tenby and Haverford, which was the country the Flemings occupied, and I am not aware that any one has investigated those physical characteristics of this population which might bear upon the ethnological question; but in revising lately some notes on the manners and popular superstitions of the peasantry of this district, I was surprised to find that the practice of divination by the bladebone of mutton still exists there, or at least existed there very recently,—as used by young girls to find out who are to be their husbands or sweethearts. I have understood that colonies of Germans in Ireland, of much less remote date, are similarly recognized by their popular superstitions. Of the second of these classes of ethnological facts, the traces are with us in general almost if not quite obliterated. We should be very much mistaken if we supposed that it was usual in the movements of races in ancient or mediæval times for the conquering and conquered peoples to amalgamate together. The latter often became an inferior, a despised, and sometimes a hated class in the new society. They seem usually to have sunk into, and become amalgamated with, the mass of the servile population, but under certain circumstances portions of the older races which had succumbed before successful invasion preserved for a long period a distinct and independent existence in the midst of their conquerors. The Anglo-Saxon race appears to have possessed a peculiar aptitude for taking into its bosom these fragments of other peoples thrown into its way, and forgetting their difference of origin; and

we lose all trace of them at a comparatively early period.

The case, however, was different on the continent of Europe, where, especially in Spain and France, fragments of distinct peoples have not only continued to exist through the middle ages, but actually remain in existence at the present day, and are known among the antiquaries and historians of the latter country by the general appellation of *races maudites*, accursed or proscribed races. The most remarkable and extensively spread of these proscribed races is that which is known in the dialects of the districts over which it is scattered by the various appellations, or rather different forms of one word, of Cagots or Capots, Caqueux, Gahets, or Agots. They were formerly scattered tolerable thickly, in France, throughout the provinces of Lower Navarre, the Basque countries, Béarn, Gascony, Guienne, Lower Poitou, Brittany, and Maine; and, in Spain, in Upper Navarre, chiefly, and in Guipuzcoa: and at the present day there is scarcely a parish in these provinces in which we do not find, if not a few families or individuals of this race remaining, at least a vivid recollection of their former existence. They were under no sort of servitude to the other classes of society, but were regarded by all with a degree of contempt and hatred which we can hardly conceive, and which was in a manner consecrated by local laws and customs. They were obliged to live separately, or collectively, in small hamlets, at a distance from the habitations of the rest of the population, from intercourse with whom they were virtually cut off, even in the performance of religious worship. A corner of the church was usually set apart for them, to which they entered by

a small door made expressly for them, which was known as the Cagot's door, and through which none but Cagots would pass for any consideration. These doors are now frequently found walled up, but they are still known universally as the *Cagots' doors*. They had a small holy-water stoup set apart for them in their own corner of the church, which nobody else would approach; and, where they were allowed to partake of the holy communion, the consecrated wafer was usually reached to them at the end of a cleft stick. They had, in the same manner, a separate patch of ground for burial, which none but persons of their own race would approach, for the mark of infamy they bore extended even to the grave. They were not permitted to enter the country towns except at particular times, and under various restrictions, and they were allowed to enter only by one door, and along one street, which were commonly known as the Cagots' gate and the Cagots' street. A decree of the parliament of Toulouse, relating to the town of Lourdes, expressly forbade the Cagots to go into that town by any other way than a small street, there indicated, and they were allowed to march only under the eaves of the houses, or rather under the spouts which discharged the water from the roofs, evidently because this was exactly the place which everybody would avoid. They were further forbidden to enter the town before sunrise, or to remain in it after sunset, or to sit down anywhere while they remained within its limits. They were even obliged, in each particular district they inhabited, to take their water from one particular spring, which was known as the *Cagots' fountain*, and which no other people would use. After these statements, it

is hardly necessary to remark that all intermarriage between them and the rest of the population was strictly prohibited.

The Cagots exercised almost universally either the craft of carpenters, or some of those which were closely connected with it, such as sawyers, joiners, cartwrights, and wheelwrights, &c. This adoption of professions may have arisen chiefly from accidental circumstances, but it was so general that in some parts the name of Cagot was used commonly as synonymous with that of carpenter.

The history of these people, who have diminished greatly in numbers, is involved in the utmost obscurity until a comparatively recent date, but their existence at a remote period is placed beyond dispute. Cagots are mentioned in a deed in the chartulary of the abbey of Luc as early as the year 1000. Gahets are spoken of in legal documents connected with Bordeaux during the thirteenth century. Records of their existence in the fourteenth century are more frequent, and show us that at that time they were neither serfs nor vassals of the lords of the land, but that they had an independent and rather anomalous existence. It is a curious circumstance, and one which adds still more to the mystery in which this question is shrouded, that these earlier documents designate the people of whom I am speaking by the distinctive appellation of *Christians*, which is certainly that of all others which we should least have expected to find applied to them. The light in which they were regarded is illustrated by some of the earlier municipal laws, of which the following, taken from the municipal laws of Bordeaux of the date of 1573, may serve as an example.

Of the Gahets.—“It is ordained, that none of those who are called *Christiens* or *Christiennes*, or otherwise *Gahets*, from whatever place they may be, shall go out of their houses or habitations, or enter into this town to go in the streets, without wearing a sign of red cloth sewn and attached in front of their breasts, in an uncovered and conspicuous place, and without having shoes on their feet, under pain of flogging or other arbitrary punishment. And the said *Gahets* shall not be allowed to enter into the butcheries, taverns, drinking-houses, or bread warehouses of this town, and participate with other people, under the same pain.”

The popular prejudice continued in full force until late in the last century, and was kept up even by the teaching and practice of the clergy. At Lurbe, in the territory of Oloron, where the *Cagots* were very numerous, the *curé*, named D'Abidos, who lived at the time of the breaking out of the great revolution, had a profound contempt for this portion of his flock, whom he kept strictly separated from the rest in the church. He took every opportunity of insulting them in public and spoke of them usually as devoted to perdition. It is still remembered that on one occasion, when a *Cagote* woman accidentally advanced beyond the limit during the performance of service, the *curé* shouted out in a brutal tone, “That is not your place, *Cagote*; and you must know that I, whether I am before you or behind you, am always your *curé*; but you others, whether you be before or behind, will never be anything else but low *Cagots*.” The clergy, however, did not always act thus. At Guizerix, in the modern *arrondissement* of Bagnères-en-Bigorre, the *Capots*, as they were there called, had

their separate place in the church and their door, through which none of the inhabitants would have passed, until one day the archdeacon of Magniac, Louis d'Aignan du Sendat, in the visitation of that church, in order to abolish the distinction, passed through the Capots' door, accompanied by the curé and other ecclesiastics; the people were constrained to follow them, and from that time they began to use both doors indiscriminately.

These old prejudices were first seriously broken down during the great political convulsions of the close of the last century, after which time, even mixed marriages between the Cagots and the rest of the population became common; and the former lost, gradually, many of their older characteristics. In many districts, which were formerly inhabited by this then miserable class, people can only now point out, by way of derision, families which are said to have been derived from such intermarriages; in others, one or two Cagots of pure blood are known to exist; but the districts are comparatively few in France, in which they still remain in any considerable number.

The natural consequences of these intermarriages, and the freer intercourse between the Cagots and the rest of the population, render it difficult now to speak with much certainty on the physical characteristics of this race, and our information on the subject is rather vague. They are said, however, to have been all distinguished by peculiarly white and transparent skins, by gray eyes, and by disproportionately large heads. According to some accounts, the lobe of the ear was either very small or altogether wanting. Such careful investigations, however, as have yet been made, appear to have confirmed none

of these statements, except the prevalence of white skins and gray eyes. In the commune of Came, canton of Bidache, arrondissement of Bayonne, there are, it appears, at present, nine families of Cagots of unmixed blood, and eleven families descended from the marriage of persons not Cagots with Cagot women. It is there asserted to have been the invariable result of these mixed marriages, that the men or women not Cagots, on their marriage with Cagot women or men, have been almost immediately attacked by severe illness, of which they either died or became ever afterwards remarkable for their robust health. It is added that cases were known of Cagots of either sex having, within a very brief period, thus sent to the grave as many as three successive wives or husbands.

The origin of a race thus mysteriously placed among a people from whom they are evidently quite distinct, and which has existed in that situation from a period far beyond any historical accounts, must naturally be a subject of mere conjectures, and these conjectures have been sufficiently various. Some have supposed that the Cagots are the descendants of the Visigoths, who occupied this part of Gaul at the close of the Roman empire. Others derive them from the northern invaders of a somewhat later age. Others again imagined them to be the remains of the Saracen settlers of the Carlovingian period; and this appears to have been the most popular notion. The opinion has also been held that the Cagots are remnants of the persecuted Albigeois of a still more recent date; and they have been supposed by some to be of Jewish origin, which does not appear very probable. There is still another notion as to the

origin of the Cagots. It is the popular tradition in some of the districts they inhabit that all the Cagots were descended from the carpenters who made the cross upon which our Saviour was crucified, and that this was the reason why they were all condemned to exercise the craft of carpenters. It is not said how they found their way to France. This is a fair example of the value of the generality of ethnological traditions.

I have here given but a very hasty and imperfect sketch of a race singular both in themselves and in the position they have so long held in the midst of another people, and I call attention more particularly to them, because they are the only one of the races known to exist under such circumstances, which has recently formed the subject of a distinct and elaborate work, at least as far as my present knowledge reaches. Those who wish for further information on the subject, may consult a very learned and laborious work, in two closely printed 8vo. volumes, published by a well-known French scholar, M. Michel, in 1847, under the title of "*Histoire des Races Maudites de la France et de l'Espagne*," where they will find a great mass of valuable materials. In the same work will be found notices of other proscribed races known to exist or to have existed, in those two countries.

Before concluding, however, I would put the question, have races similarly circumstanced ever existed in this country? I confess that I am inclined to suppose that such may have been the case, and I think we may trace the evidence of them where certainly it would hardly be sought by an ethnologist. It is well known to the architectural archæologist, that many of our older country churches present singular peculiarities—openings in the external walls, known

by such technical names as squints, &c. which allowed a view of the altar from a corner of the church, separated from the part occupied by the body of the congregation;—sometimes openings in the external walls, as though to communicate from the interior with people standing without; and frequent instances of small doors in the walls, which have been built up evidently from a remote period,—all which peculiarities are only explained by conjecture, and the explanations are anything but satisfactory. It has often occurred to me that the real object of these openings and doors, in some cases at least, may have been to allow people to participate in the religious service, who were not permitted to intermix on an equality with the rest of the congregation, towards whom they held a similar position to that of the Cagots of France. In England, the last traces of such an intermixture with our population may have disappeared long from man's memory, as it is probable that it may now similarly disappear in France, in the course of a century, or a century and a half, except so far as the existence of them has been commemorated in the writers of our age. It is a hint which I would throw out as not unworthy of the attention of the English ethnologist, as well as of the architectural antiquary, and which may, perhaps, admit of further investigation.*

* A correspondent of the "Builder," Mr. Edward W. Godwin, pointed out an example of what may have been a Cagot's door, in the north wall of the church of Little Hampston, near Totness. "My attention," he says, "was drawn to it in 1856, by the rector, the Rev. Mr. Hill, who, if I remember rightly, informed me that it always went by the name of 'The Devil's door,' a cognomen not at all unlikely to have arisen from the popular prejudice against the Cagots. The doorway is small, and appears to have been blocked up at a remote period."



XX.

ON THE ORIGIN OF RHYMES IN MEDIÆVAL
POETRY, AND ITS BEARING ON THE
AUTHENTICITY OF THE EARLY
WELSH POEMS.



HERE are, in modern times, two artificial means employed to distinguish poetical composition, in addition to its metrical form ; these are alliteration, and rhyme. The first of these appears to be the earlier in date, and in fact it seems more natural to the people of rude and primitive ages to mark the consonance of the beginning of their words than that of their terminations. The primitive poetry of the Teutonic race, the only one with which we are really acquainted, was all alliterative. When the Teutons invaded the provinces of the Roman empire, we have no evidence that any of the peoples with whom they came in contact used rhyme in their verse ; but, on the contrary, we know that rhyme was not in use in that language which was then the most universally spoken, the Latin, and it is precisely in this language alone that we can trace the gradual development of rhyme from its first im-

perfect form till it reached perfection. I will not speak of the literature of some of the Asiatic peoples, in which rhyme appears to have existed from an early period, for we seem to know nothing of its history in those languages, and it has nothing to do with the history of rhyme in Europe.

The history of rhyming verse is in itself sufficiently curious. We know that, by accident, or perhaps as an occasional embellishment of speech, words rhyming with each other were sometimes introduced into a line by the best writers of antiquity, as in that of Ovid,—

Quot cœlum *stellas*, tot habet Roma *puellas* ;

and in Virgil,—

Illum *indignant*i similem, similemque *minanti*.

These are both perfect examples of what were called at a later period Leonine verse, in which the syllable rhyming to the word at the end of the line was placed on the cæsura of the verse, and it was therefore generally, like these, a rhyme on the penultimate syllable. But there can be little doubt that, if noticed at all, it was merely considered as an ingenious and playful conceit of the writer. Like all other conceits of this description, it was used more and more frequently by the later Latin poets, and was no doubt then considered as an embellishment of their versification. Lines like the above occur very frequently in Ausonius, as in his poem on the Moselle, l. 273,

Desperatarum potiones rursus *aquarum*.

Gradually, as the knowledge of the old Latin prosody

became lost among all but scholars, the rhyming of the middle of the verse with the end became a distinctive mark of the versification; and it was when both quantity and accent began to be entirely neglected, that the plan of marking the divisions of the lines of verse by making them rhyme together at the end was gradually introduced. At first these final rhymes were only introduced here and there in a poem, and they were not confined to couplets, but an indefinite number of consecutive lines were made to end in the same syllable, or at least a syllable having the same vowel sound. For a long period this final rhyme, when used, was very imperfect, and was evidently not at all considered as a principle, and the verses in which rhymes are used are generally intended to be good Latin hexameters and pentameters; but, as the use of these final rhymes came more generally into use, the old system of metrification was itself abandoned, and it was considered only necessary to make the lines consist of a certain number of syllables.

We owe this change to the southern ecclesiastics, who adopted this new style of versification for their chant music; and it requires caution in treating of the poems in which it occurs, for many of the compositions attributed in manuscripts to the great ecclesiastics of the earlier centuries of the church will not bear a critical examination, but are evidently works of a much later date. Regular rhyming verses, are, however, found in the fourth century, though not very abundantly, among the genuine hymns of St. Hilarius, bishop of Poitiers, who flourished in the middle of the fourth century; of pope Damasus, who occupied the see of Rome from 366 to 384; and of St. Ambrose,

bishop of Milan, who died in 397. It is only in the hymns of the latter of these ecclesiastics that the rhyming verse becomes regular and frequent. The first lines of the hymn *de Quadragesima* of St. Hilarius, will serve as a specimen of the style of these rhyming hymns.

Jesus, quadrigenariæ
 Dicator abstinentiæ,
 Quique ob salutem mentium
 Hoc sanxeras jejunium, &c.

Late in this century—in the year 393—the great St. Augustine composed a popular song against the religious sect of the Donatists, in long lines, all rhyming imperfectly in a final *e*, and in a kind of metre differing totally from anything acknowledged by pure Latin prosody. It consists of nearly three hundred lines, of which a few from the beginning will serve for an example.

Omnes qui gaudetis de pace, modo verum judicate.
 Abundantia peccatorum solet fratres conturbare;
 Propter hoc Dominus noster voluit nos præmonere,
 Comparans regnum cœlorum reticulo misso in mare,
 Congreganti multos pisces, omne genus, hinc et inde.
 Quos quum traxissent ad littus, tunc cœperunt separare,
 Bonos in vasa miserunt, reliquos malos in mare.
 Quisquis novit Evangelium, recognoscat cum timone.

This poem is divided into a sort of stanzas by the repetition of the first line, *Omnes*, &c., at not quite equal distances.

Even during the fifth century, this system of rhyming verse in the church hymns had evidently not yet quite established itself; but, at the beginning of the sixth, we find regular Leonines scattered here and there through the poem of Orientius, entitled *Com-monitorium fidelibus*, and the rhyming hymns are more

common during this century, but still they belong to the south of Europe; and the same may be said of the century following. This new style of composition seems to have been slow in reaching Gaul and Britain—in fact, for a while, there were few writers to practise it. One or two short pieces of verse, composed in rhyme, are ascribed to Aldhelm, who flourished at the close of the seventh century, and who had visited Italy and loved such adventitious ornaments of poetry. At the beginning of the next century, Boniface, who was much in Italy, and after him Bede, use rhymes, though sparingly. A little poem among the letters of the former (Epist. 65) commences thus:—

Vale, frater, florentibus
Juventutis cum viribus,
Ut floreas cum Domino
In sempiterno solio.

With a remark which shows that this sort of versification was looked upon by the scholars in the West as an ingenious novelty. They, in fact, seem to have been slow in adopting it, and the principal poets of the age of Charlemagne, such as Alcuin, Angilbert, Theodulf, Walafrid Strabo, and Hrabanus Maurus, never used it. The use of rhyme, however, became more general with the Latin poets of the ninth century, and during the two centuries which followed it became universal. Still the Latin poets among the Anglo-Saxons kept as far as they could to the older and purer models, and they rarely make use of rhymes, unless in some imitations of the ecclesiastical hymns. Such is the hymn on king Athelstan's victory at Brunanburg in 938, printed in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. ii. p. 179, in which the rhyme is very rude and

imperfect. These ecclesiastical hymns were generally arranged in stanzas of four lines, which sometimes ended all in one rhyme; sometimes they rhymed in couplets, and sometimes the second line only rhymed with the fourth. A hymn on the Epiphany, ascribed to a monk of St. Gall, in the middle of the ninth century, named Hartman, presents a rather more elaborate system of rhymes, of which the first stanza may serve as an example. It begins thus:—

Tribus signis,
Deo dignis,
 Dies ista colitur;
Tria signa,
Laude digna,
 Cœtus hic persequitur.

But this lyric poetry, if we may so call it, had not yet become popular out of the church, and the numerous Latin poets, who used rhyme during the tenth and eleventh centuries, on the continent, abandoned, in a great measure, the rhymes from line to line, to adopt the rhyme from the cæsura to the end of the line, which soon became known by the name of *Leonine verse*. The origin of this name, and the period at which it was adopted, are equally unknown.

During the period while this gradual development of rhyme had been going on in the Latin poetry, as written by scholars and ecclesiastics, a great event of another description had taken place. The Latin language, as spoken by the people, had, in the different provinces of the empire, been gradually changing into the various Neo-Latin dialects, which we are accustomed to speak of as the Romance dialects, represented by French, Spanish, Provençal, Italian, &c.

The poetry of all these derivatives from the Latin tongue was distinguished by the use of rhyme. This rhyme was at first very imperfect, for it appears not to have been copied directly from the more finished verse of the ecclesiastics, but from a ruder popular Latin versification which had prevailed among the people, of which we have already given one example from a poem by St. Augustine, and of which two or three other examples are known, though they are rare. One of these is as old as the seventh century, and commemorates a victory of Clotaire II. king of the Franks over the Saxons in 622; it is short and rhymes throughout on one rhyme in this manner:—

De Chlothario est canere rege Francorum,
Qui ivit pugnare in gentem Saxonum;
Quam graviter provenisset missis Saxonum,
Si non fuisset inclytus Faro de gente Burgundionum, etc.

It would appear that little stress of the voice was thrown upon the end of the lines, so that the rhyme fell but slightly on the ear, which perceived chiefly the consonance of the vowels, whether the rhyme was double or single, and thus gradually the consonants were disregarded, as in the two first lines here, where *Francorum* was considered a perfectly good rhyme to *Saxonum*. This disregard of the consonants became eventually complete, so that in Latin *martyrium* would rhyme with *vocibus*, and *stans* with *dat*. This sort of rhyme, which is termed assonance, is that adopted in the earlier Romance poetry which we possess, almost invariably; and in that poetry also, as in the popular Latin poetry which had preceded it, the same rhyme was carried through a great number of

consecutive lines, and was then changed for another, which was repeated in the same way. One of the earliest of these Romance poems known—perhaps the earliest—is the *Chanson de Roland*, which appears to be as old as the earlier half of the twelfth century; and an example from it will best explain this sort of rhyme. The following lines rhyme on the vowel *i*, and on the last syllable.

Tuit li prierent li meillor Sarrazin
 Qu'el faldestoed s'est Marsilies asis.
 Dist l'algalifes, "Mal nos avez baillit,
 Que li Franceis asmastes à ferir," etc.

In the following lines, the rhyme is on the penultimate and final vowels.

E Anseis laiset le cheval curre,
 Si vait ferir Turgis de Turteluse;
 L'escut li freint desus l'orée bucle,
 De sun osberc li derumpit les dubles,
 Del bon espïet el cors li met l'amure;
 Empeinst le ben, tut le fer li mist ultre,
 Pleine sa hanste el camp mort le tresturnet.
 Co dist Rollans, "Cist colp est de produme."

This is the imperfect rhyme and the kind of verse in which nearly all of the earliest known French poetry is written; but in the south of Europe vernacular poetry had been brought to greater perfection, and a lyric poetry had arisen, with a very elaborate system of rhymes, formed perhaps originally upon the church chants. This poetry is known to us as existing in the ancient literature of Provence, and it was no doubt brought thence to be introduced in the northern French and Anglo-Norman literature, in which we begin to find it after the middle of the twelfth century, and during the following century it became

established in English poetry, of which good examples will be found in my volume of Lyric Poetry of the thirteenth century, edited for the Percy Society. I have already intimated that rhyming Latin verse was never much in use among the Latin writers of the Anglo-Saxon period in this island. Rhyme was never, properly speaking, in use in Anglo-Saxon poetry; the only two or three examples known, were evidently intended only as ingenious exercises, perhaps in imitation of the Latin rhymes, and cannot be ascribed to an earlier date than the beginning of the eleventh century. In fact, till the twelfth century, rhyme belonged to the vernacular poetry only of the Romance languages; it was evidently taken from the Latin; and I have shown how in Latin rhyming verse originated, and how it became developed very slowly and gradually, until it was brought to perfection and into common use at a late period.

There is, however, apparently one very extraordinary exception to this rule. The Welsh lay claim to a series of vernacular poets, under such names as Aneurin, Taliesin, and Merlin, who are asserted to have lived in the *sixth* century, and others belonging to ages immediately succeeding, and they show us what are asserted to be their genuine compositions, and which present, strangely enough, a system of perfect rhymes, and of the different forms of versification, exactly like those which, after a long and laborious course of formation, are only first found in French poetry in the twelfth century. This is, certainly, a very startling circumstance, and one which may well lead us to hesitate in accepting these Welsh poems of which I am speaking as authentic. We have no evidence whatever of the use of rhyme among

the ancient Celts, either in Britain or in Gaul, and surely it is utterly inexplicable how, if this perfect system of rhyme had existed so generally and publicly among them, the whole Latin church should have remained totally ignorant of it, and should have been striving through two or three centuries to invent and improve rhyme, when it was all the while to be found close beside them in a perfect state of development! For it must be remembered that these Welsh poets were Christians, and that they were in continual intercourse with the Christians of the continent—of the Latin church, and might certainly have given a helping hand to the Latin attempts at rhyme. Nay, more, some of these very ecclesiastics on the continent, such as St. Gall, Columbanus, and many others, who were either making attempts at Latin rhyming verse themselves as an ingenious novelty, or who were at least witnessing the attempts of others, were themselves of Celtic origin, and ought to have been able to tell people that there was nothing new in it.

Sharon Turner, in his "Vindication of the Genuineness of the Ancient British Poems," imagines that he has found a triumphant answer to any objection to the genuineness of the poems in question grounded on the fact just stated, when he points to these instances of rhyme in the early mediæval Latin versifiers, a plea which might perhaps have deserved some consideration if the system of rhyme of the supposed primæval Welsh poetry had been as rude and inartificial as that of these Latin poems. But this is not the case. We have seen how, in Latin, the rhymes came into use in Italy and the south of Europe, how they remained for ages rude and inartificial, and became only gradually known in the west,

until their more perfect development, which can hardly be placed earlier than the ninth and tenth centuries, and how rhyme was adopted in the vernacular French, in which it was still further perfected and developed during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Now the system of rhyme of the primitive Welsh bards, such as Taliesin, and Aneurin, and Llywarch Hên, does not resemble that which we find scattered sparingly over the Latin metrical compositions of the sixth and seventh centuries, but it is an evident imitation of the more perfect rhyme of the French versification of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as much so as the vernacular English poetry of the same period. Any one who will take the trouble to compare the Gododin attributed to Aneurin, and most of what appear to be the oldest of the poems ascribed to Taliesin, with the old French *romans de geste*, cannot fail to be convinced that, in their metres and rhymes, the former are imitated from the latter. They present exactly the same character of composition, with the same repetitions of rhymes through divisions of unequal length. The resemblance is far too close to be accidental, and would be perfectly inexplicable, if not impossible, if we suppose a difference of date of six centuries. But, as we go on comparing, we are encountered on all sides by resemblances of a still more striking character. A poem of Taliesin on the death of Owain, the son of Urien Rheged, is composed in the following versification:—

Enaid Owain ap Urien,
 Gobwyllid ei Ren
 Oi Raid.
 Reged Udd ai cudd tromlas,
 Nid oed fas,
 Ei gywyddeid.

Another is addressed to Urien Rheged himself, in the following metre:—

Urien Reget,
Duallovyet
 Y Leuenyd.
Eur ac Aryant
Mor eu divant,
 Eu dihenyd.

Another, which has received a great amount of mystical interpretation, runs thus:—

Mon Mad gogei,
Gwrhyd erfei,
 Menai ei dor.
Lleweis wirawd,
Gwin a bragawd,
 Gan frawd esgor.

Now this is a very common form of verse in different metres in the French poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and no doubt was in use in the twelfth. The following is taken from a poem probably of the thirteenth century:—

Ce n'est pas honour ne courtesie,
Ne gueres le tienk à mestrie
 De vassal,
Pur une petite bailie,
De prendre à nulle rien atye
 De fere mal.

The following is a sample of an English poem of the thirteenth century:—

At evesong even neh,
Ydel men ȝet he seh,
 Lomen habbe an honde;
To hem he sayde an heh,
That suythe he wes undreh,
 So ydel forte stonde.

Who can doubt for a moment that the French metres and rhymes were in this case the models of the Welsh as well as of the English verses. Mr. Nash, in his work on Taliesin, has shown clearly that the last of the poems of that poet quoted above was really an elegy on an archdeacon of Anglesea, who flourished in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. I could point out other arrangements of metres and rhymes in these supposed early Welsh poems, the types of which are equally found in the French and English of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it is not necessary to multiply examples. If these poems are genuine, the bards must indeed have been endowed largely with the spirit of prophecy, when they wrote in the sixth century in systems of verse which were not invented until the twelfth!

There is a well-known and frequently quoted passage of the “*Descriptio Cambriæ*” of Giraldus Cambrensis, relating to the poetry of the Welsh as it existed at the close of the twelfth century, for that was the date at which the book alluded to was written, in which he acknowledges that the Welsh songs were then composed in rhyme, but he informs us at the same time that the favourite ornamentation of their poetry was alliteration, and he speaks of it as resembling closely the alliteration of the English.* As the English example which he gives,—

God is together—gammen and wisedome,

is a perfect alliterative couplet, it is clear that Giraldus knew very well what English and Anglo-Saxon alliteration was. The first of his Welsh examples is

* Girald. Camb. Descrip. p. 889, in Camden's *Anglica*, &c.

equally perfect, and has both the Anglo-Saxon alliteration and rhythm:—

Digawn Duw—da y unic.

His second example is evidently corrupt in the manuscripts, and the alliteration is lost. Both are found in old Welsh poems, but as they are evidently popular proverbs, it is not necessary to suppose that Giraldus took them from those particular poems. I believe that the Welsh scholars allow that this alliteration is characteristic of their oldest poems.

Now I confess that the form of this Welsh alliterative verse, and the manner in which Giraldus speaks of it, lead me to think that it was originally borrowed from the Anglo-Saxons. I do not mean to say that the Welsh had not a poetry of their own—all rude society has, but it changes or takes its forms under the influence of outward circumstances, and it was the very last class of literature which came to be committed to writing. It appears probable that the poetry of the Anglo-Saxon minstrels was not committed to writing before the tenth and eleventh centuries; and long before that, if the Anglo-Saxons had any strictly historical poetry of an early date, it had without doubt perished, or the chroniclers and historical writers would have made some use of it. Such strictly historical poetry was the least common in the primitive condition of society, and it was the least permanent. The poetry of the Saxon “bards” was chiefly mythic in its character, that is, it celebrated either the deeds of the gods from whom the whole Teutonic race claimed its descent, or the exploits of strictly mythic heroes to whom the regal families and the great chiefs traced their pedigree.

Among the poetry attributed to the supposed early

Welsh bards, there is much, such as the love for riddles and for enigmatical expressions, and for a particular class of didactic poetry, which has its close resemblance in the Anglo-Saxon literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and which was I think borrowed from it in the same way that much of the rest was borrowed from the Anglo-Norman of a later date. The Welsh had no doubt abundance of traditions and legends as mythic as those of the Anglo-Saxons. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they were just in that political condition when men look back with eagerness to a supposed former glory, and love to exaggerate the supposed exploits of their ancestors, and when they readily mistake their mythical legends for historical ones. This, we know, was rarely done by the Anglo-Saxon historical writers, though one or two examples occur. I suspect, then, that previous to the Norman conquest, the Welsh minstrels had borrowed largely from the literature of their Anglo-Saxon neighbours, and, among other things, had adopted their form of verse; that afterwards, when they came in contact with the Normans, they changed their verse taken from the Saxons for that now brought over from the continent, except that for some time they retained their taste for alliteration along with the universal adoption of rhyme. It was, in fact, the same process of change which was going on contemporaneously in English literature itself, where we find in the same manner and for a considerable period the Saxon alliteration retained and joined with the Norman rhyme.

Mr. D. W. Nash has published a very excellent dissertation on the poems of Taliesin,* which I would

* Taliesin; or, the Bards and Druids of Britain. By D. W. Nash. 8vo. London, 1858.

strongly recommend to all who feel an interest in the investigation of this question. Mr. Nash has pointed out frequent allusions in these poems of Taliesin which fix the composition of many of them to a date not older than the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. I think that he might have gone further than he has gone, for I feel convinced that we have no Welsh poetry existing of an older date than the twelfth century—when it appears to have begun to be committed to writing. The oldest known MS., the “Black Book of Caermarthen,” is, I suspect, not older than the latter part of the twelfth century.* The Welsh appear at that time to have seized upon the continental poetry and romance with great eagerness, for it is the foundation of a great mass of the mediæval Welsh literature. This is fully apparent to any one who has studied the mediæval literature of Europe in general and extensively. I believe, further, that the influence of the Norman invasion was felt in the language as well as in the literature, for, from a comparison of the forms of the words, I am satisfied that a very large portion of, if not all, the Latin element which is found in the Welsh tongue was derived directly from Anglo-Norman, which was gradually mixing with it in the same way that it was mixing with English. For instance, in the formation of the Neo-Latin dialects, the final *s* of Latin words was invariably preserved, so that this termination became characteristic of the nominative cases singular of most of the masculines; thus the Latin *nullus* became *nuls*, or

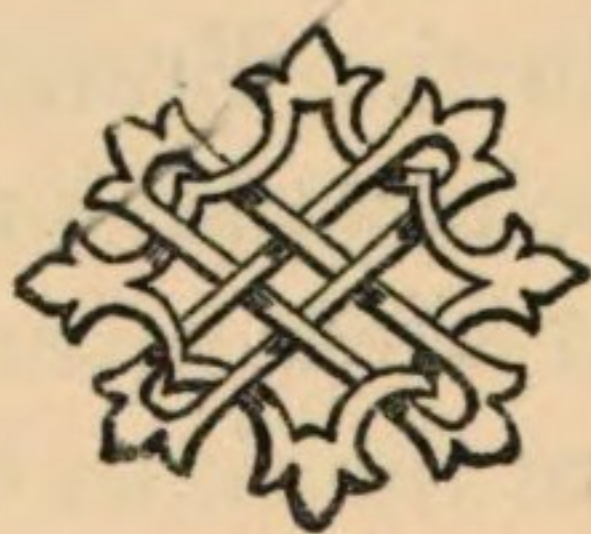
* The antiquity of Welsh MSS., when judged hastily by their appearance, is generally much overrated, for the writing preserved the character of an earlier date long after it was abandoned in England and on the continent.

nus, in Anglo-Norman, while the objective case would be *nul*, representing *nullum*, *nullo*, or *nulli*, all of which are without the final *s*. So, also, the Latin *pons*, a bridge, became in Anglo-Norman, nominative, *pons*, or *ponz*, objective *pont*. This rule was strictly preserved during the twelfth century, but after that period a considerable change began to take place in the forms of Anglo-Norman and French, one of which was the abandonment of the old nominative in *s*, *x*, or *z*, and the adoption of the objective for the nominative. I will not on the present occasion attempt to explain the reason of this change, but it certainly did take place, and from that time the nominative case singular would be *pont*, and not *pons*, or *ponz*; but if I found *pont* as the nominative in a composition of the twelfth century, I should at once say that it could only be the error of a later copyist. This is the case with a very large portion of the nouns in the language. Now it is a remarkable circumstance that the words in the Latin element of the Welsh language, as far as I have examined the question, have generally the Anglo-Norman forms, and in a great proportion of them in such forms as were the results of a change in the French or Anglo-Norman themselves, and which could hardly from any possibility have arisen if these words had been adopted from the Latin before the sixth century. Therefore, when I find in a poem ascribed to Taliesin, and bearing the title of *Kad Goddeu* (the Battle of the Trees), such a line as this,—

Bum *pont* ar trigar, | I have been a bridge for passing over,

I cannot help coming to the conclusion that, either the bard, among his other gifts of prophecy, possessed

the knowledge of the grammar of languages which had not yet come into existence, or that the line in question is a modern composition. It may perhaps be alleged that these might have been interpolations in the original text; but this would not be a good defence, and the occurrence of this class of words in writings pretending to an early date would be sufficient to raise strong suspicions. But the system of versification and rhyme in the poems ascribed to Taliesin, Aneurin, Llywarch Hên, and the other Welsh poets anterior to the twelfth century, is, I am convinced, quite fatal to their character of genuineness. The objection does not, as Sharon Turner seemed to think, consist merely in the use of rhyme, but in the use of perfected systems of rhyme which belonged to as late a date. I may add, that this is by no means the only objection to the genuineness of the poetry attributed to the early Welsh bards.





XXI.

ON THE HISTORY OF THE DRAMA IN THE
MIDDLE AGES.

THE standard literature of England contains so much that is founded upon mediæval models, or at least that is only thoroughly understood and duly felt when we trace its forms from mediæval times, that it is to be regretted that the history of English literature, as well as of the English language, is not more generally taught and studied. Every reader of Shakespeare—which is equivalent to saying, every one capable of reading the English language—must have felt that in the drama, as it appears in the writings of our great bard, there is something peculiarly national—that it is not the drama of France, nor the drama of any other European nation as it now exists, and that it is much less the drama of Rome or of Greece, which latter country is justly considered to have given the original models of this class of literature—but that it is simply and solely the drama of England. To understand why this is the case, it will be necessary to trace the history of the dramatic art among our forefathers through many ages.

Almost all the fine arts derived their origin more or less from religious ceremonies and observances. The desire to convey through the eye, and thus impress more strongly on the mind, religious myths, and the forms and attributes of the deities, gave origin to the arts of painting and sculpture; music, in its primeval shape, was but a form of worship, and the earliest poetry was employed in praising and celebrating the gods and demigods of the rude creed of primitive ages. The writers of antiquity describe to us the actors in the Bacchic ceremonies, collected together in a waggon, with painted faces and unpolished chants, as presenting under Thespis the first model of the noble drama of Greece. The English stage was in its origin precisely similar to that of Greece, though it went through a course of progress and development peculiar to itself.

It would be to little purpose in a sketch like this to enter into the question whether the religious ceremonies of the Teutonic nations were accompanied with any kind of pantomimical exhibitions, and whether these formed any part of the numerous popular observances and superstitions which were borrowed from them in the earlier ages of Christianity in the West. This we know, that at a comparatively early period some of the great festivals of the Church were often attended with such scenic representations. Thus, on a saint's day, the choral boys, or the younger clergy, would act one or more of the miracles of that saint; and on a particular festival of the Church they would represent those particular incidents of Gospel history which that festival was instituted to commemorate. These performances appear at first to have been mere dumb show, and the first step towards

giving them a more perfect dramatic form was the putting in the mouths of the actors a few appropriate texts of Scripture, in Latin, which were probably chanted. The ingenuity of the clergy was soon employed in composing brief dialogues, which were still in Latin, although at times they aspired to somewhat of a poetic form, and were at least embellished with rhyme. In regard to the great majority of those who witnessed such representations, these Latin dialogues must have been no better than dumb show, and this seems to have been felt by the performers. Another innovation was therefore made, and the authors of these rude attempts at dramatic composition contrived to intersperse with their Latin dialogue a few sentences here and there—a proverb, or the burden of a song, or even a song itself—in more popular phraseology, and in the vernacular tongue. We have examples of this practice in German and in French, and if we have it not in English, it is because, at the period when it prevailed, French, or one form of it which we call Anglo-Norman, was the only tongue which was acknowledged in this country by those who had the composition of such plays.

A considerable number of these Latin, or principally Latin, dramas are preserved in manuscripts, belonging nearly all to the twelfth century, which we must consider as the first period of the mediæval stage. The theatre of the Romans had been totally lost in the great struggle under which the western empire had sunk, and the very words which expressed it seem to have been forgotten. The popular term which the clergy gave to their performances was the Latin word *ludus*—in mediæval French it was supplied by the word *jeu*—both equivalent to the English word

play, the sense of which, as applied to a dramatic performance, is derived from the mediæval practice. Other names were given to them, having reference more particularly to the subjects represented; they were called *Miracula*, or Miracles, when their subjects were taken from the legends of the saints; and Mysteries, when they were derived from the Old or New Testament, and embodied what were considered the mysteries of the faith. These latter distinctive titles have survived the performances themselves, and writers on dramatic history still usually speak of them as *Mysteries*, or *Miracle-plays*.

Hitherto the scene of these performances was the interior of the church, and the performances themselves, as well as the irreverence and even profanation to which they naturally led, soon excited scandal among the stricter ecclesiastics. Accordingly, during the thirteenth century, we find them provoking the remonstrances of the clergy, and proscribed by canons and decrees of ecclesiastical synods. This censure gradually produced its effect, and after the beginning of the fourteenth century we hear little more of this class of dramatic performances in churches. The exhibition, however, had no doubt been profitable as well as entertaining, and when dismissed from the ecclesiastical body it was eagerly seized upon by the secular corporations. The guilds and trading companies now became the great theatrical managers of the middle ages, and in their hands the religious drama became further developed. In the first place, it was necessary that the dialogue should be carried on entirely in the vulgar tongue, and in doing this the composers consulted the popular taste in filling up the bare outlines of their predecessors, and adding

matter of various sorts that was likely to draw an audience. It was also necessary to produce a new stage, and this was done by raising a scaffold upon wheels, which offered the further advantage of locomotion, so that the performers could change their audience without breaking up their arrangements. To this arrangement, which reminds us strongly of the actors of Thespis in their waggons, people gave the popular title of a *pageant*—a word of very uncertain derivation, but which we find subsequently in general use to denote stage machinery of all kinds.

We know, from an Anglo-Norman writer of the thirteenth century, that this system of pageantry was already in practice at that period; and it is in the century following that we begin to meet with these religious dramas (religious, as far as the subject went) in their more popular and perfect form. Of the great English collections which have been preserved, two, the Towneley and the Chester Mysteries, were probably composed about the end of the fourteenth century, or early in the fifteenth. The rigid moralists and disciplinarians of the Church seem at all times to have set their faces against such exhibitions; and the Wycliffite reformers of the fourteenth century declaimed against them with considerable vehemence; as zealously, indeed, as any of the preachers against the immorality of the stage in modern times. One of these reformers has left us a discourse against the Miracle-plays, which is preserved in a volume of Wycliffite sermons of the end of the fourteenth century, and gives us a curious idea of the prevalence and popularity of such performances at that time. The writer pleads the sinfulness of turning God's deeds and miracles into jest and game, and alleges,

with reason, that they were calculated to destroy our reverence for holy things, and to weaken people's belief; and he combats the arguments urged in their favour, that they were intended to promote the worship of God, and make people familiar with sacred subjects. The preaching of the Wycliffites, however, appears to have had no effect, and the Mysteries and Miracle-plays continued to be extremely popular during the whole of the following century, and until after the Reformation.

In the fifteenth century we become intimately acquainted with this remarkable class of dramatic literature, as it existed at that time in England, from the circumstance that several collections of Mysteries have been preserved, three of which, the Chester, Coventry, and Towneley collections, are now printed; that the various items of expense connected with the getting up of the plays have been handed down to us in the books of certain corporations; and that nearly contemporary writers have left us notices of the manner in which they were performed. The most valuable of all the corporation books for this purpose are those of the trade guilds, or companies, at Coventry, copious extracts from which were published by Mr. Sharp, in a privately printed volume on the Coventry Mysteries. We learn from these, and from the plays themselves, that each guild had its particular play and its own players, so that the whole series of plays, including the principal events of the Old and New Testament, beginning with the creation and ending with doomsday, were distributed among these corporate bodies. The period of performance was the feast of Corpus Christi, and, as far as the performers were concerned, it was evidently attended

with much personal enjoyment, and an unusual share of eating and drinking: the latter appears generally to predominate. In the accounts for the year 1490, we find that on one of the days of rehearsal the actors consumed nine gallons of ale to the somewhat small proportion of seven pennyworth of bread, and that on the same day their dinner and supper consisted of two ribs of beef and a goose. During the performance, as the pageant moved along, they seem to have stopped to drink at the door of every tavern, for we find in the accounts of the expenses of the day such entries as—"Drink to the players between the play times, 13^d," and "Payd for the players drynkyng at the Swanne dore, ij^s. viij^d;" and "Item, spent at tavern," occurs frequently. Besides these indulgences, the players received wages, which, comparing the value of money then with its value now, were high enough to show us that the qualifications of a performer were not rated low, and that they must have thought it necessary to study their parts with care. The following entry, in which it will be observed that the names of the characters are given and not those of the actors, makes us acquainted with the wages of the players of the Smiths' Company, at Coventry, upon Corpus Christi Day, 1490. It will be remembered that God here means Jesus Christ:—

Payments of ther Wages of Corpus Christi Day.

Imprimis, to God, ij^s.

Item, to Cayphas, iij^s. iiij^d.

Item, to Heroude, iij^s. iiij^d.

Item, to Pilatteis wyffe, ij^s.

Item, to the bedull, iiij^d.

Item, to one of the knights, ij^s.

Item, to the devyll and to Judas, xvij^d.

Item, to Petur and Malkus, xvj^d.

Item, to Anna, ij^s. ij^d.

Item, to Pilatte, iiij^s.

Item, to Pilatteis sonne, iiij^d.

Item, to another knight, ij^s. Summa, xxviiij^s.

The mynstrell, xiiij^d.

Under other dates, there are sometimes entries of payments of subordinate performers, of which I am tempted to give one, because it relates to the same play as the payments just mentioned, and because the duties performed by this particular player are peculiar. It is this:—

p^d to Fawston for hangyng Judas, iiij^d.

p^d to Fawston for coc-croyng, iiij^d.

The dresses of the characters appear in some cases to have been expensive, and the continual entries of payments for mending or renewing them give us a tolerable idea of their character; but these entries are often made with a *naïveté* which shocks our notions of propriety, and show us that the Wycliffite preachers were right in urging that the tendency of such performances was rather to spread a feeling of irreverence for things sacred, than to promote religious feeling. Thus we have frequently such items as—"Item, payd for the spret (*spirit*) of Gods cote, ij^s." We learn from these entries that God's coat was of leather, painted and gilt, and that he had a wig of false hair, also gilt. Caiaphas and Annas were robed as bishops. Herod appears to have had a mask, which, from the allusions to his character, had probably a ferocious look: there are many payments for mending and painting his head, and he had a helmet and crest, which appear to have been much ornamented. He had a gown of satin and blue buckram,

and carried a sceptre. Pilate, to judge by his wages, was the most important personage in this pageant, yet the principal expenses into which he led the company related to the mending of his hat. His son is comparatively ill paid for his acting, as he receives in wages but fourpence; and he seems to have been employed merely to carry some of the attributes of the father, for the payments relating to him regard chiefly the repairs of his hat and of a poll-axe and sceptre. Pilate's wife was a more important personage, as she figures in a dream wherein she was admonished to warn her husband as to his proceedings with regard to the Saviour. She was named in the mediæval legend Dame Procula, and, as she was dressed in a gown of the first fashion, it seems to have been customary to borrow one for the occasion from the most stylish-dressing dame in the town. We have an entry to the following effect: "Item, to reward to Maisturres Grymesby for lendyng of her geir ffor Pylats wyfe, xij^d." The devil seems to have been dressed in leather; his head required often mending and painting; fourpence is on one occasion paid for a staff for him, and there are continual charges for painting his club. It is hardly worth our labour to speak in detail of the dresses of the minor characters; it may simply be remarked that the canvas of Judas's coat cost two shillings, and that tenpence was paid for making it; that Peter had a wig, and apparently a long beard; and that the beadle was dressed in a jacket and hood.

The stage, as I have already stated, was raised upon wheels, and it consisted of one, two, and sometimes of three floors, representing respectively heaven, earth, and the infernal regions. The contrivances for

producing stage effect seem to have been extremely ingenious, and sometimes complicated. The records we have been quoting throw little light on this part of the subject, but we learn more from the marginal stage-directions in some of the manuscripts of French mysteries of the same date. Thus, in the fall of Lucifer, it is directed in the margin of one of these that "Lucifer and his angels are now to be let down by means of a wheel secretly contrived to work upon a screw pivot." In the performance of the Creation, when God separates light from darkness, the stage direction is, "Now a painted cloth is to be exhibited, one-half black, and the other half white!" When God separates the waters, "Now must be shown, as it were, a sea, which has previously been covered, and fishes in it." And when God creates the fowls, the stage direction is, "Now must some one secretly let fly little birds into the air, and place on the stage swans, geese, ducks, cocks, hens, with the most uncommon animals that can be obtained." In one of the Coventry books we have the entry, "Item, p^d for starche to make the storme in the pagente, vj^d." There are some amusing entries relating to stage machinery in the same books, as, for example:—

Item, payd for mendyng hell mowthe, ij^d.

Item, payd for payntyng of hellmought, iij^d.

Item, payd for makynge of hell mothe new, xxj^d.

And again:—

Item, payd for keepyng of fyer at hell mothe, iiij^d.

I have somewhere read that on one occasion the necessity of making "hell mouth" new arose from an accident in the management of this fire, which in-

volved the infernal regions in a general conflagration. We have in these same books the commemoration of an equally serious and more deliberate case of incendiaryism: "Item, payd for setting the world of fyer, v^d."

It is curious that, when we compare that part of the collection preserved and printed as the Coventry Mysteries with the entries in the books of the Smiths' Company relating to their pageant, we see at once that it could not be the same play they acted. In fact, the substance of their play is broken into one or two smaller ones. These, however, are near enough in subject to allow of a brief analysis in illustration of the characters as described in the books, and of the general plan of these singular compositions. The scene introduces the Saviour leading his favourite disciples to the Mount of Olives, and at first both the dialogue and acting are a mere paraphrase of the Gospel narrative. At length he awakens his disciples, and tells them that his time was come, and that Judas was at hand to betray him. "Here," says the stage direction, "Jesus with his disciples goeth into the place, and there shall come in about ten persons well beseen in white harness and brigandines, and some disguised in other garments, with swords, glaives, and other strange weapons, as cresets with fire, and lanterns and torches light; and Judas foremost of all, conveying them to Jesus by countenance." The Saviour asks them what they seek, and they reply, "Jesus of Nazareth." On his declaring that he is the man, they all fall to the ground, and only rise again at his bidding. After some further contention, Judas kisses Christ, and then his companions rush upon him. It is at this

moment that Peter, moved by his zeal, strikes Malchus with his sword, and cuts off his ear; which Christ immediately heals by a miracle, and expostulates with Peter for using violence in his cause. The Jews now seize upon Christ, and lead him away, with a good deal of vulgar abuse and ribaldry, which was calculated for the taste of the mob. Another scene now opens, in which Herod appears sitting upon his throne, surrounded by his doctors, or courtiers, who greet him with the most abject flattery. When they have concluded, he addresses the audience in a style of exaggerated pomposity, which is best described by Shakespeare's phrase of out-Heroding Herod. Herod may be truly said to swear like a Turk, for he has nothing in his mouth but Mahom, or Mahomet. He boasts of being the greatest and most powerful personage in the world, talks of everybody as his slaves, and declares that if any one dares to speak without his orders he would involve them in immediate and immense destruction. This impotent threatening appears to have been chiefly addressed to the audience, and must, no doubt, have created great amusement. We know from Chaucer that it was a great object of ambition to be thought worthy and capable of performing the part of Herod in the Mysteries. Herod gives orders to his officers to go and effect the capture of Jesus. Another scene introduces to us the two priests, Caiaphas and Annas, seated in state, and a messenger arrives with tidings of the capture of the Saviour, and gives an account of the whole transaction. Soon afterwards Christ is led in by the Jews, and witnesses are heard against him, and he is reviled and beaten. One of the maid-servants accuses Peter of being one of the disciples, which he denies,

and the cock crows (Mr. Fawston's part). This is repeated, and then Peter weeps, and goes out, and makes his lament. Caiaphas and Annas, meanwhile, despatch a messenger to Pilate, to require his presence at the "Moot-Hall," on account of "a great matter" that required speed. Judas, in the mean time, is seized with repentance, and, returning to Caiaphas and Annas, offers back the money for which he had sold his Redeemer. They refuse it with bitter jeers, and, to use the words of the stage directions, "then Judas casteth down the money, and goeth and hangeth himself." We have seen in the books of the Smiths' Company that one of the subordinate actors assisted the traitor in this last act of self-retributive justice. Next day, in consequence of the summons, Pilate takes his seat in the "Moot-Hall," and Jesus is brought before him for trial, Caiaphas and Annas acting as accusers. After hearing all the witnesses, Pilate is of opinion that no crime is proved, and is desirous of setting Jesus at liberty; but this is opposed by the Jews, and after much contention on the subject, a quibble is raised about jurisdiction, and the prisoner is passed over to king Herod. Herod storms and rages considerably, and causes his victim to be scourged and tormented, and then he sends him back to Pilate with full authority to condemn him to death. Pilate was, therefore, considered as a subordinate personage to king Herod. Meanwhile a new scene has begun. "Here entereth Satan into the place, in the most horrible wise." Satan outdoes Herod in his profane swearing and boasting, and exults over what he foresees will be the fate of Christ, knowing that he would descend to hell, and believing that he would remain there under

his subjection. In his joy, he calls to hell to prepare for his reception:—

Helle! helle! make redy, for here xal come a gest,
Hedyr xal come Jhesus that is clepyd Goddys sone,
And he xal ben here be the oure of none,
And with the here he xal wone,
And han ful shrewyd rest.

The subordinate fiends, however, appear to have had more shrewdness than their master, and one of them suggests that it would be better to keep such a guest away. He says, addressing himself to Satan:—

Out upon the! we conjure the,
That nevyr in helle we may hym se;
For and he onys in helle be,
He xal oure power brest!

An entirely new light now breaks upon Satan's mind, and, in his alarm at the destruction which threatens his own power, he determines to prevent the Saviour from being put to death. He resolves, therefore, to work upon the fears of Pilate's wife:—

To Pylatys wyff I wele now go,
And sche is aslepe a bed ful fast,
And byd here withowtyn wordys mo,
To Pylat that sche send in hast.

“Here,” says the stage direction, “shall the devil go to Pilate's wife, the curtain drawn as she lieth in bed; and he shall make no din; but she shall, soon after that he is come in, make a ‘rewly’ noise, coming and running off the scaffold, and her shirt and her kirtle in her hand, and she shall come before Pilate like a mad woman, saying thus:—

Pylat, I charge the that thou take hede!
Deme not Jhesu, but be his frende!

Gyf thou jewge hym to be dede,
Thou art dampnyd withowtyn ende!"

And she goes on to tell her vision; in consequence of which Pilate determines to have nothing to do with the persecution of Jesus, but, after a vain attempt to persuade the Jews to set him at liberty, he returns him back upon their hands. This seems to have completed the Mystery performed by the Smiths' Company. When it was concluded, the stage, or pageant, on which it was performed, moved forward upon its wheels, and proceeded, no doubt, to recommence in another part of the town, while the next stage in order took its place, and another set of performers acted the Mystery which came next in succession.

The play I have thus briefly described was one of those in which the Scriptural story was least embellished with extraneous incidents. The authors of these compositions, however, were not without reason charged by the moralists with seeking mainly to cater to the taste of the vulgar populace, to do which they found it necessary to introduce comic scenes and burlesque, or at least droll characters. This was effected most frequently by giving the humorous parts to some of the lower personages who belonged to the plot itself; but in some cases personages are introduced purposely as humorous characters, who had otherwise no claim to a place in the story. Thus, in the play of Cain and Abel, in the Towneley collection, an ill-conditioned servant is given to Cain, and the disputes between him and his master are full of coarse humour. In the play of Noah's Flood, the wife of Noah, instead of obeying the call of her husband to enter the ark, proceeds at the last moment to

the tavern to join her gossips, to the great annoyance of the rest of the family, who are eager to get afloat; they remain drinking, gossiping, and singing, until the danger becomes imminent; and, after much mutual abuse, Noah beats his wife soundly, or, according to another version, Noah himself is the vanquished. The play of the Shepherds, in every collection, gives room for the introduction of mirthful pictures of rustic life. Even the Virgin's conception is made a subject for ribaldry; and in the Coventry collection we have a mystery, or play, on the subject of her pretended trial. It opens with the appearance of the somnour, who reads a long list of offenders that appear in his book; then come two "detractors," who repeat certain scandalous stories relating to Joseph and Mary, upon the strength of which they are summoned to appear before the ecclesiastical court. They are accordingly put upon their trial, and we have a broad picture of the proceedings in such a case, which would be worthy to employ the pencil of a Rowlandson. In the play of the Slaughter of the Innocents, a laughable scene was always furnished in a skirmish between the slaughterers and the mothers of the victims, who are made to indulge to a considerable degree in what would now be called "Billingsgate" language. In the Coventry collection, the Woman taken in Adultery is also made the subject of a good deal of merriment. Among the comic characters in these plays, we must not forget the executioners, or, as they are termed here, the tormentors, who are especially distinguished for their drollery; and the various acts of the passion, the scornful treatment, the scourging, and the crucifixion of the Saviour, must have kept the audience in a roar

of laughter. Lastly, one of the merriest exhibitions in the whole course was Doomsday, or the Day of Judgment, in which all those individuals who are supposed to have given offence or scandal on earth are exposed to popular satire, and in very popular language. The miller, who stole his share of the corn which was brought to his mill, and the ale-wife, who sold short measure, were among the greatest persecutors of the lower orders during the middle ages, and are here held up to the bitterest scorn; and the people of fashion, who it was pretended spent on fine clothes the money which ought to have gone to the poor, were not spared. It may be remarked, that the gross language which in these plays is put in the mouths of women as well as of men, gives us but a low opinion of the delicacy of manners among our forefathers of the fifteenth century.

The same humorous scenes, or episodes, are found in the French Mysteries, where they exhibit usually more originality of conception. The characters, too, are here more frequently extraneous, or at least unnecessary, to the plot. In one of the earliest of these, the play of St. Nicholas, by Jean Bodel, the merriment was produced by a vulgar scene between a party of gamblers in a tavern. In the Miracle-plays, which were more abundant in French than in English, thieves, or persons of the lower classes of society in towns, or peasants in the country, or beggars and other vagrants, are introduced for the purpose of humorous scenes of this description. In one of these, which has for its subject the life and miracles of St. Fiacre, the humorous scene is introduced in the form of an interlude, and is called a farce—*cy est interposé une farsse*. This farce consists of five personages, a

brigand or robber, a peasant, a sergeant, and the wives of the two latter. The brigand appears first on the stage, and meeting with the peasant, inquires of him the way to St. Omer. The peasant retorts in the style of clownishness which it was then fashionable to ascribe to every one who was born a "vilan," or serf, or who was descended of such servile blood. The robber, offended, but putting the most charitable construction on the first offence, repeats his question, and that with sufficient politeness, but he meets with a second rebuff, more offensive even than the first. Finding him thus uncourteous, he avenges himself by robbing the peasant of a capon; but in this conjuncture the sergeant comes up, interposes, and attempts to recapture the capon, and, in the struggle, the brigand strikes him a blow which fractures his arm. The brigand escapes, and his two antagonists quit the scene for a moment, while their wives come forward to occupy it. The peasant's wife informs the sergeant's wife of the injury which her husband has sustained, and the latter lady rejoices at an accident which she thinks has deprived him of the power of beating her. In all these scenes the women are made the object of broadest satire, and the picture of married life is not flattering to the domestic character of our forefathers. The two wives adjourn to a tavern, where they call for wine, and make merry, their conversation turning chiefly on the defects of their husbands, who, however, eventually return upon the stage, and give them practical evidence that they are neither of them disabled.

This is one of the earliest instances of the application to these scenes of the word *Farce*, derived from an old French verb *farcir*, to make merry, and there-

fore signifying a drollery or merriment. In the Towneley Mysteries there is a second play of the Shepherds, the plot of which is a perfect farce, and has as little to do with the subject of the Mystery itself as the French farce just described with the story of St. Fiacre. A party of shepherds meet on the moors, where their sheep-walks lie, and enter into conversation on the evil times in which they live, their own miserable condition, and the inclemency of the weather. In the midst of it enters an individual of very equivocal character, who goes by the popular name of Mak, and who joins in the familiar discourse, and remains with them till they all compose themselves to sleep, it being night. Mak then rises, picks out the fattest sheep in the flock, and carries it home to his wife. They consult on the best means of concealing their booty, and, at the wife's suggestion, they put it in the cradle, and she lays herself beside it, pretending to be just delivered of a child. At early dawn the shepherds awake, visit their flocks, and soon discover that a robbery has been committed. Their suspicion at once falls upon Mak, and they trace him to his house, where the various subterfuges of the offender and his worthy consort, and the final discovery of the stolen sheep, are represented in the broadest style of caricature, which is heightened by the pointed allusions to contemporary manners, and even to local circumstances and events. While the shepherds are rejoicing over the recovery of their lost property, an angel suddenly enters on the stage, and announces the birth of the Redeemer, and the play of the Mystery goes on as usual. Such are the scenes to which the term *farce* was first applied.

In France, these farces began to be separated from

the Mysteries in the course of the fifteenth century, a circumstance which arose partly from the existence in that country of certain joyous societies or clubs. One of the oldest of these societies was that of the clerks of the Bazoche, or lawyers' clerks of the Palace of Justice, who had their president, a sort of king of misrule, and, among other ceremonies, performed drolleries of the kind I have been describing. This society had existed from the fourteenth century. Early in the reign of Charles VI, that is, about the end of the fourteenth century, there was formed at Paris another society of young people of education and mirthful disposition, who took the name of *Enfans sans Souci* (or Careless Boys), and chose a chief, to whom they gave the title of *Prince des Sots* (the Prince of Sots, or Fools.) While the Bazochians, as the others called themselves, performed their farces, the *Enfans sans Souci* got up a sort of dramatic satires, which they called *Sotties*, which had sufficient analogy with the others to excite considerable jealousy, for it appears that each had obtained a privilege for the sole performance of their peculiar representations. The jealousy between them was finally appeased by a sort of treaty, whereby the Bazochians gave their rivals the permission to perform farces, and the *Enfans sans Souci* allowed the Bazochians to perform *sotties*. The Bazochians, meanwhile, had invented a new class of dramatic compositions, which they called *Moralities*, and in which they sometimes introduced real personages, and at others allegorical personages, such as Good Advice, Instruction, Discipline, Luxury, &c. These various productions, especially the farces, soon became extremely popular in France, and great numbers of them were printed in the earlier part of

the sixteenth century, and many of them are preserved, though they are regarded among the rare productions of the popular literature of the age, and fetch high prices among collectors. The character of these farces was entirely identical with the humorous scenes which had been introduced into the Mysteries, and they were equally barren of invention. A popular story, an ancient fable, a contemporary adventure—anything of this kind served for a plot. Many of them are mere tavern scenes; others expose family quarrels and domestic mishaps. The adventures of two rogues, one of whom steals a tart from a pastrycook, while the other is caught in the attempt to follow his example, are the subject of one farce. In another, the wives, dissatisfied with their husbands, because they were growing too old for them, discover a method of making them young again. Sometimes the scene is laid in a court of law. But the most common subjects are love intrigues, and these, as well as the general character of these pieces, speak little for the morality of the age in which they were composed. In one of these farces, the wife sends her good man to the tavern to fetch wine, while she enjoys the company of her *amoureux*; and the repeated return of the husband to ask some frivolous question relating to his errand causes many disagreeable interruptions to the confidences of the lovers, in which the mirth of the piece consists. The *Sotties* and *Moralities* were more fanciful and extravagant in their plan, but they always combined more or less of satire on the character and condition of the age. The title of one of these pieces will be sufficient to give a notion of their general character; it is, “A new Morality of the Children of Now-a-days (*Mainte-*

nant), who are the scholars of Once-good (*Jabien*), who shows them how to play at cards and at dice, and to entertain Luxury, whereby one comes to Shame (*Honte*), and from Shame to Despair (*Deseipoir*), and from Despair to the gibbet of Perdition, and then turns himself to Good-doing." All these personifications, Now-a-days, Once-good, Luxury, Shame, Despair, Perdition, and Good-doing, are personages in the play. This arbitrary personification is sometimes carried to an extraordinary length. The three personages in one of these Moralities are Everything (*Tout*), Nothing (*Rien*), and Everybody (*Chacun*). The idea of personifying *Nothing* on the stage is certainly ingenious, and could hardly have entered the head of anybody but one of the *Enfans sans Souci*.

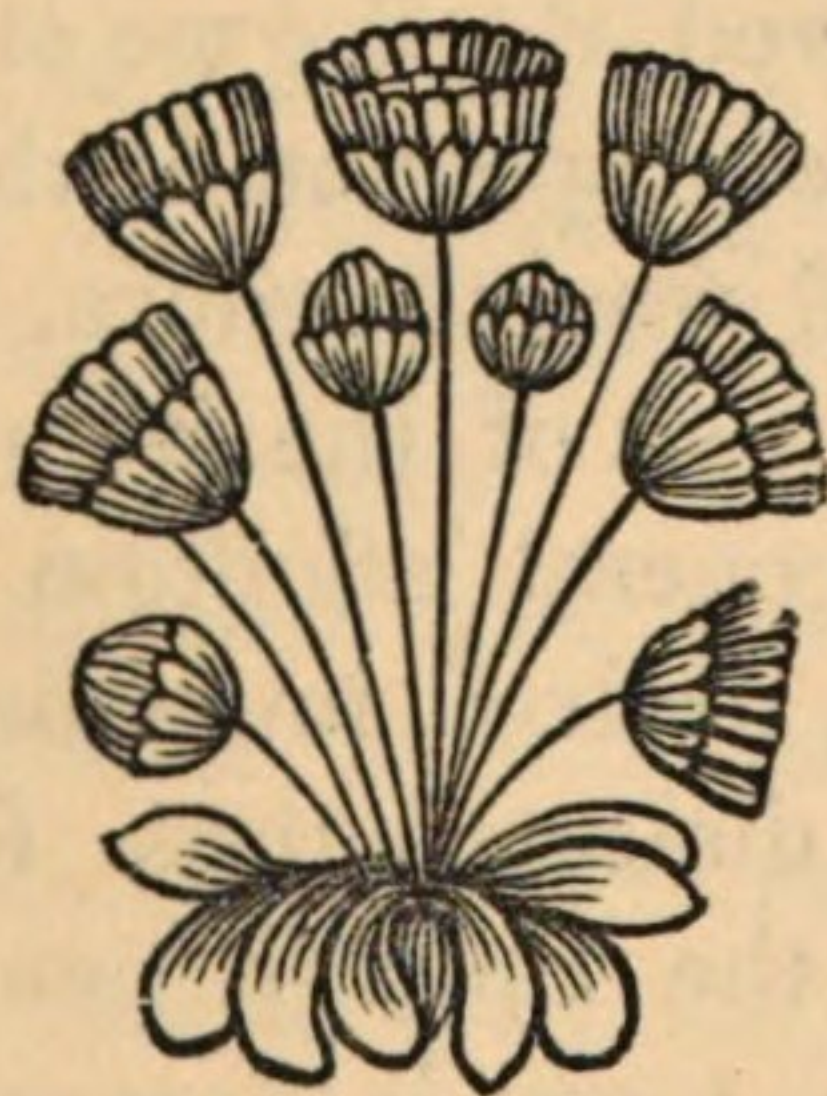
For some reason or other, the Moralities and *Sotties* found more imitators in England (when at the beginning of the sixteenth century these compositions were introduced here) than the farces. Perhaps this arose in a great measure from the general preoccupation of people's minds with the religious and social revolution which was then in progress, and the aptness of a morality or a *sottie* for conveying instruction or reproof. The fashion for this class of dramatic compositions did not, however, last very long in this country, and, as the Mysteries also went out of repute at the time of the Reformation, their place was supplied gradually by a new class of plays. The reformers saw at once the advantage which might be taken of the stage in spreading in a popular form their principles and opinions, although they were shocked by the irreverence and profanity of the representations which had previously occupied it, and

they introduced in place of these, plays in which were acted by personages histories of different kinds which illustrated the crimes and evils of the Papal government. Such was the play of "King John," by the celebrated bishop Bale, and other similar compositions might be mentioned. These, however, were heavy and dull, and they wanted that principal element of popularity—the comic scenes—which had been the great support of the Mysteries. But the taste for dramatic performances was now so strongly established, that, as these disappeared from the stage, they were succeeded by plays which differed from them only in subject, and which differed from the farces in the much greater extent of their outline. They also formed a feature of the new and more masculine character of the literature of the age. It was, however, nothing more than the Mysteries enlarged, and their subjects changed; for the new playwrights only took stories from profane history, or from romance, or from the narratives of the story-tellers, and arranged them so as to be represented by personages, and they followed so closely the old plan that they introduced into these histories and stories the same sort of comic scenes, and in the same manner, which, indeed, had been preserved in the *Sotties* and *Moralities*, where, in consequence of these comic scenes being given ordinarily, as in the Mysteries, to the more vicious or the more foolish of the personages of the piece, these characters were termed, technically, the *Vices*, or the *Fools* of the play. The *Moralities* themselves, which in England took the more scholastic title of *Interludes*, which had, indeed, been sometimes given in the previous period to the Mysteries, gradually ran into this new form of composi-

tion. The struggle between the Interlude, or Morality, and the new class of drama, was going on during the earlier part of the reign of Elizabeth; and although several attempts had already been made, the latter was not brought to its perfect form until the middle of her reign. Soon after that period it was raised to its most glorious and elevated point by the genius of Shakespeare. But even in Shakespeare himself, we still see the influence of the old mediæval forms, the boldness of the personification, the carelessness of the dramatic unities, the reckless anachronisms, and, especially, the interweaving of the favourite comic scenes with the most serious and even tragical plots—those characteristics, indeed, which the foreign critics of Shakespeare have so often misunderstood. It may be added, that the old Mysteries were still performed to the lower classes in a debased form by mountebanks in booths at fairs, though they had lost all their former importance; the memory of which, however, was still preserved in the use of the term *a play*, a farce, &c., and in such phrases as *to play*, to bring on the stage, and the like, which we still preserve.

My sketch of the history of the English drama ends with the close of the mediæval period; but we may cast a glance at what was going on in the literature of neighbouring countries while it was here experiencing this wonderful development. In Germany, the same kind of development was showing itself more feebly, and there was there, contemporary with Shakespeare, a drama which differed from his mainly in its want of energy and vitality. In fact, it did not live long. In France, the development itself was wanting. The Moralities and other plays of that

class gradually became obsolete, and had no successors but the mere routine of masques and court pageantry. Our neighbours can hardly be said to have possessed a stage of their own, until, in the following century, they formed one upon the model of the ancients, which was formal and cold; and though France has since had her great and perfect dramatists, she cannot be said to possess, like England, a national drama, which has grown up and firmly rooted itself in the genius of the people, and the first seed of which, as I before observed, was sown in the Mysteries of the middle ages.





XXII.

ON THE LITERATURE OF THE TROBADOURS.



AS the vast fabric of the empire of the Cæsars crumbled to pieces before the inroads of successive invaders, the two principles of civilization and barbarism were brought face to face, and, while the latter gained the physical victory, the moral superiority of the former was soon felt far beyond the limits of Roman provinces. In the general fusion of races, which immediately followed, the degree of social refinement depended upon the proportion of the Roman element of civilization, and was, therefore, greater as it approached near the seat of the Roman power: it was marked by the general adoption of the language of the conquered, derived immediately from Rome. The Neo-Latin dialects, thus formed, prevailed throughout Italy, the Spanish peninsula, and Gaul. Beyond these limits, towards the west and north, where the various Teutonic dialects held undisputed sway, society presented a harsher and less refined tone, but in the sequel, perhaps, a more healthy one. Singularly enough, this harsher spirit got possession of the Church, which, during the middle ages, exhibited almost universally a feeling hostile to civilization.

It was amid the beautiful scenery, and beneath the mild climate, of the Roman provinces of Narbona, opening upon the Mediterranean sea to the south, between the Alps and the Pyrenees, and known in subsequent ages by the general appellation of Provence, that the remains of Roman refinement seem to have held their ground longest, amid the general wreck that surrounded them. It was there that the language preserved with least change the forms of its Roman prototype; there, still, are found many of the noblest monuments of Roman art; and there was long cherished that unyielding hostility to the barbarised form of Romish Christianity, which caused it to be regarded by the mediæval Church as a mere nest of pestilential heresy. There, too, existed a literature strongly distinguished from that of the cloister in an age when the coarse asceticism of the monastery appeared everywhere to have chilled the hearts of those who professed to hold the genial humanising faith of the Saviour.

In the decline of the Roman power, the greater portion of this district was occupied by the Visigoths; of all the Teutonic tribes, the most apt for civilization, and the one which most readily adopted the Roman manners. The fourth in succession of their chiefs, the first Theodoric, lent his arm successfully to shield Rome from the invasion of Attila, and left his body among the hundreds of thousands who fell in the terrible battle of Châlons. On his son, of the same name, history has conferred the title of Theodoric the Great. The Burgundians, who followed the Visigoths into these parts, also embraced with alacrity the civilization which offered itself to them. The Franks came in last, one of the least cultivated of the German tribes, and gradually, during the sixth cen-

tury, effected the conquest of the Burgundians and Goths; and the period which followed was anything but favourable to the progress of social improvement. For some time, Provence remained an integral portion of the empire of the Carlovings; but as that empire was also weakened and broken, this part of Gaul obtained its independence, under a number of feudal chiefs, who were in character essentially mediæval, but still preserving in their domestic manners much of that politeness and refinement which must be ascribed to Roman, and perhaps, also, in some measure, to Saracenic influence.

The leisure of the feudal lord and his knights must have hung heavy upon their hands, for feudal life was, above all others, unceasingly monotonous. The chief pastime of their unconverted forefathers had been hard drinking, during which they told boastful tales of their own valour, or listened to the exploits of those mythic heroes, whose history had been handed down from generation to generation. When we become more intimately acquainted with the social life of the castle, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we find that the chess-board, the dance, and a number of games, mostly of a childish character, helped to give a little variety to such amusements. The ardent spirited inhabitants of the south required more exciting diversions; and a peculiar form had been given to these by the traditional refinement of manners before mentioned. From a few expressions which lie scattered through the pages of monkish writers, we learn that, even in their worst times, the natives of Provence loved the dance and the song, and that they were distinguished by a tone of gallantry which contrasts strongly with the habitual

ferocity of barbaric life, but which was regarded with no indulgent eye by the monkish writers alluded to. Under the counts of Provence, this taste for gallantry was matured into a system which might vie with the polite affectation of the age of Louis XIV. By one general assent, love became with the Provençal knight his entire occupation, when not engaged in the field—love, carried on according to prescribed forms and rules, was the game with which every one was expected to be acquainted; and in its language, poetry, he was expected to converse. It was this circumstance which gave its distinguishing character to the literature of Provence. The poetry of the troubadours is chiefly of a lyric form, and may be divided into two classes—songs of strife and songs of love,—of which the latter is by much the most extensive. That love and poetry were inseparable, was a fundamental doctrine; “No man can be a good poet if he be not in love,” says the troubadour Elias Cairels:

Nulhs hom non pot ben chantar
Sens amar.”

And we shall find repeatedly, if we look through their lives, that the troubadours dated the rise of their poetic talent from the time of their first amorous adventures. “Giroud le Roux,” says his ancient biographer, “was a courteous and good composer of songs; he fell in love with the countess, daughter of his feudal lord, and the love he cherished for her taught him poetry.”

There was a curious difference between the two great families of the Teutonic and Neo-Latin languages in the appellation given to the poet. In the former, it was derived from a verb, which signified *to create*, in the latter, from one signifying *to find*; and

thus, with the Saxons and Germans, poetry was a creation, while with the Provençals and French it was an invention, and the poets were called (according to the dialect) *trobadors* or *trouvères*, persons who invent. These trobadors, or trouvères, were in general wild, restless, extravagant fellows, like too many of their descendants in later times, and this character became still more strongly impressed by the mode of life which their profession entailed upon them. A poet now profits by the sale of his book; but a trobadour of the olden time had no other means of publishing his compositions to the world but by wandering from court to court, and reciting them himself. A numerous class of society throughout Europe lived in this manner, repeating from house to house their own works, or those of others, which they had committed to memory, and they were everywhere honoured and rewarded by their hearers. This was the practice in Provence, as well as in other countries; but there, from the peculiar state of society we have just described, there appeared another and totally different class of poets—a knightly race, who composed, not for gain, but with the object of insulting their enemies, or, more frequently, with that of paying their court to their ladies. These are the trobadors of whom we would more especially speak on the present occasion, for it is to them chiefly we owe the love-songs and the biting and satirical *sirventes*, the classes of literature more peculiarly that of the trobadors.

Literature, among this class of trobadors, had a totally different value from that which it possessed in the hands of the wandering minstrel. The latter was ever regarded as belonging to a servile caste, and,

though rewarded and patronised, he was not allowed a position of familiarity with his worldly superiors. For him, literary talent procured food and clothing, but with the poor or inferior knightly trobadour it stood in the place of riches, and even of rank, and he associated freely with all that was great and noble. Giraud le Roux, already mentioned as having fallen in love with the daughter of his feudal lord, the count of Toulouse, was the son of a poor knight. The adventures of the lady were, however, in this instance, much more remarkable than those of her lover. In 1147 she accompanied her father to Syria, where she was taken prisoner by the Saracens, and became an inmate of the seraglio of Noureddeen, prince of Aleppo, who eventually made her his wife; and after the death of her husband, she governed for some time the little kingdom of Aleppo as guardian of her infant son. After the departure of his lord and his mistress for the crusades, Giraud le Roux appears to have given up the life of a courtier, and to have thrown himself upon the world in the character of a wandering jongleur.

Bernard de Ventadour, one of the most eminent of the Provençal poets of the twelfth century, was the son of a menial servant in the castle from which he took his name. The court of the viscount of Ventadour was at that time celebrated for its literary splendour; and his lord, Ebles III., gave every encouragement to a youth who attracted attention equally by the beauty of his person and by his poetic talents. Bernard fixed his love not on the daughter but on the wife of his feudal lord, the viscountess of Ventadour, and he was secretly received on that equivocal footing legalized in the love code of Pro-

vençal gallantry. For this lady he composed a great number of lyric pieces, all remarkable for a gracefulness of style superior to that of most of his contemporaries. Bernard made no secret of his consciousness of this circumstance;—"It is no wonder," he says, in one of these songs, "if I sing better than any other troubadour, since I have a heart more inclined to love, and more pliant to its laws. Body and soul, talent and knowledge, force and power, I have put all in love; I have reserved none for any other thing." The familiarity between the lady of Ventadour and the poet at length aroused the jealousy of the viscount, who banished Bernard from his court, and confined his wife in her chamber, where she was cut off from communication with the world. Bernard quitted the Limousin, and repaired, about the year 1160, to the court of Normandy, where literature was encouraged by the duchess, Eleanor of Guienne, who four years afterwards ascended the throne of England, with her husband, Henry II. With this lady, whose son, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, derived from her his love of poetry, and who was at this time in the prime of her beauty, Bernard formed the same kind of *liaison* which he had been compelled to break with the viscountess of Ventadour, but which appears, as far as we know, to have been, in this instance, without interruption. For Eleanor, as duchess of Normandy and queen of England, Bernard composed some of his best songs. Two stanzas from one of them will show the sort of familiar services which it was the duty of the favoured lover to perform—he is admitted to her bedroom, and assists in undressing her:—

"My lady has so much craftiness and address, that she makes me always believe that she is going to love

me. She deceives me agreeably; she leads me into error by her sweet semblances. Lady, leave your craft and deceit. In whatever manner your vassal suffers, the hurt will fall upon you.

“Oh! she will do ill, my lady, unless she makes me go where she undresses herself; and unless, having permitted me to kneel beside her bed, she deigns to present me her foot, that I may untie her well-fitting shoes!”

A few years later, Bernard de Ventadour left the court of Eleanor to revisit his native land,—to sing new songs and make new conquests,—and he took up his abode during the remainder of his life, at the court of Raymond count of Toulouse.

The gallantry of the trobadours led them, not unfrequently, into more daring adventures in the service of their ladies. Pierre de Maënzac, a poor knight of Auvergne, in the latter half of the twelfth century, was to the wife of Bernard de Tiercy what the trobadour last mentioned had been to the viscountess of Ventadour, and had composed many songs in her praise. Perhaps Bernard was a cruel husband; and for this, or some other reason, the lady of Tiercy allowed herself to be carried off from the castle of her lord by Pierre de Maënzac. It was a great prey for a poor knight, who had neither castle to shelter nor retainers to defend her; but fortunately he was beloved and protected by the dauphin of Auvergne, and into one of his castles he carried his mistress. The lord of Tiercy soon discovered the place of their retreat, and demanded the restoration of his wife. But the dauphin, who (as we learn from the biographical fragments relating to the trobadours preserved in old Provençal manuscripts) was “one of

the wisest and most courteous knights in the world, the most liberal, the most skilful in arms, and most knowing in love and in war," refused to give up either the ravisher or the lady. The result was an open war, the more serious because the bishop of Clermont took part with the husband, and joined his forces with those of Tiercy in the invasion of Auvergne; but the dauphin defended himself well, and in the end Pierre de Maënzac was allowed to keep his prize.

Acts of violence like this were not uncommon at the period of which we are speaking, and several stories might be told remarkably characteristic of the state of society amongst these feudal chiefs. Raymbaud de Vaqueiras, a distinguished troubadour of the twelfth century, was the friend of Boniface marquis of Montferrat, one of whose vassals, and his especial friend, Boson d'Anquilar, was passionately enamoured of a young damsel named Isaldina Adhemar, but her parents refused their consent to the union, and, to put her out of his reach, placed her under the protection of Albert marquis of Malaspina, in whose castle she was shut up. Boson, heart-broken at the loss of his mistress, took to his bed, refusing every consolation that could be offered, and there seemed little hopes of his recovery. In this emergency, Boniface collected a few of his friends, and, accompanied by the troubadour Raymbaud, who tells the story, penetrated into the castle of Malaspina by night, and carried away the lady by force. Raymbaud relates another adventure in which he was engaged with the marquis of Montferrat, when they carried away a lady by open daylight, as she was going to be married against her will.

In accordance with the Provençal love code to which we have just alluded, when the knight had selected his mistress, he could not be received into her favour at once, but was obliged to pass through a regular novitiate, and advance by several steps or degrees. A trobadour of the thirteenth century has limited these degrees to four; during the first of which the suitor was to pay his court in silence, without venturing to give utterance to his wishes; in the second, which was to commence with the moment when the lady gave him sufficient encouragement to allow him to speak, he was to go no further than respectfully *praying* for her good will; the third step was that in which he had prevailed so far as to be *listened to*, and was rewarded now and then with gloves, or a scarf; the last degree was that of *lover*, which the lady at length condescended to grant by the first kiss with which he had been favoured, and from this time the knight became irrevocably attached to her service. The admission to this last degree was an imposing ceremony. Kneeling before his lady, with his two hands joined between her two hands, the knight devoted himself entirely to her, swore to serve her faithfully even to death, and to guard her with all his power from hurt or from outrage. The lady, on her part, declared that she accepted his homage, pledged to him the tenderest affections of her heart, and, in sign of the union which was thenceforth established between them, she generally presented him with a ring, and with a kiss raised him from his kneeling posture. To render this ceremony still more solemn, a priest was not unfrequently introduced, who blessed the union of the lady with her suitor, and the latter was now understood to possess

all her love and affections, her body alone being the property of her husband. Matrimony was thus reduced to its lowest degree of moral importance, even supposing, with M. Fauriel (which, however, is rendered very improbable by the general tone of contemporary history), that the attachment between the lady and her love were, in many cases, of a Platonic character. It was a doctrine of this school of gallantry, that love could not possibly exist in the married state, and that, if a lady subsequently married a knight who had been her lover, the love between them ceased from the moment of solemnising the nuptials. We ought, perhaps, not to be surprised at the existence of such loose notions of marriage, when we consider that in those feudal times it was seldom anything more than an interested or political union. Among the innumerable love questions which were debated in the courts of gallantry, we find one which peculiarly illustrates the doctrine just mentioned. A knight made love to a lady who was already provided with a lover, and she therefore could not listen to his suit; but, unwilling to leave him entirely without hope, she promised to take him for her knight, in case she should lose the one who already enjoyed her love. Shortly after this promise, the lady married her first lover, on which the second knight claimed the fulfilment of her promise. The lady, in surprise, said that she owed him nothing, since, so far from having lost her first lover, she had taken him for her husband. But the knight persisted, and a lady of high rank and celebrity was called upon to sit in judgment, who condemned the married woman to fulfil her promise, on the ground that she had veritably lost her first lover in making him her

husband. The knight, in all such cases, was bound to keep secret the name of his lady, who was only spoken of either by some poetic name, or by some allusive phrase, known to themselves, so that when she was celebrated in the troubadour's songs, none but herself knew who was referred to.

Such was the artificial character given to social life in the land of the troubadours during the twelfth century, under the influence of which almost every knight who laid claim to a courtly education, became a poet, and the number of their love-songs, still preserved, is very considerable. The period at which this state of society arose is uncertain; but it cannot be distinctly traced further back than the twelfth century. The courts of love, which were the highest refinement of these principles of gallantry, and in which questions like that just stated were pleaded and judged, existed in the middle of that century. They probably originated in the games and amusements of the castle, in which such questions had been put and answered in sport; and it is, perhaps, to one of these games only that the count of Poitiers, the earliest known troubadour (who wrote about 1100), refers, when he says to his lady in one of his songs, "And if you propose to me a game of love, I am not so foolish but that I know how to choose the best [question?] rather than the bad one."

E si m'partetz un juec d'amor,
No suy tan fatz
Non sapcha triar le melhor
Entr'els malvatz.

In fact, we might easily adduce evidence of the existence of such games in countries where the courts

of love, in their more perfect form, were never established. Early in the thirteenth century the poetry of the troubadours began to decline. The state of society which we have been describing, combined with the independent position which the feudal chiefs of these districts had held towards the court of Rome, had produced freedom of inquiry in religious matters, and old traditions of a less corrupt form of Christianity were gaining ground, and became what the church of Rome looked upon as a dangerous heresy. In the sanguinary war raised by the church under pretence of a *crusade* against the sect of the Albigeois, the fair countries where the troubadour had sung were devastated with rapine and slaughter in their most savage forms; and before the middle of the thirteenth century, the last sparks of poetry in Provence were extinguished by the blind bigotry of Romanism. The poets who followed were only troubadours in name—the talent which had distinguished their predecessors was fled for ever, or, in a few instances, had taken refuge in other lands. The courts of love were continued in name, but their practical application had ceased, and they gradually degenerated into poetical or rather rhyming clubs, such as were formed at a somewhat later period in Italy and Spain. The gallantry of the earlier age was continued in an equally immoral, but in a coarser form. Provence no longer offered, in its social manners, the same model of polite refinement; but it is a difficult thing to extinguish civilization entirely, and the spirit of refinement which had been checked in the land of the troubadours, scattered, in its departure thence, a sprinkling in almost every country in Europe. In Italy, before the end of the century, it

produced the immortal Dante. In France, almost at the same time, the mystical principles of the gallantry of the trobadours were embodied in the celebrated "Romance of the Rose." And in England, not quite a century later, the same spirit, derived through Italy and France, burst forth in the poetry of Chaucer.

A Latin writer, probably at the beginning of the fourteenth century, who is known only as master Andrew the chaplain, published a collection of questions propounded in the courts of love, with the judgments given in each case, and he generally adds the names of the ladies who judged them, who all belong to the twelfth century. An example or two will best show the peculiar character of these questions, which often become too trivial to bear repeating. A young lady, possessing already a lover, is married to another man; has she the right, after her marriage, of discontinuing her attachment to the lover and refusing him her accustomed favours? The viscountess Ermengarde of Narbonne was called to judge this case, and decided it against the lady. A lover had no other means of corresponding with his lady but by a secretary; the latter took advantage of his position, and obtained the lady's favours; the question to be decided was, whether the secretary should be the lady's lover or the man he had betrayed. This case was brought before the countess of Champagne, who gave judgment that, as the secretary had shown his unworthiness in betraying his trust, and the lady had degraded herself by listening to a secretary, they should be allowed to continue their love to each other, but that they should for ever be cut off from communion with other lovers, and that no knight should ever make love to the lady, and no lady

ever listen to the secretary. It will be quite enough to mention one other question, and as the ladies were always chosen as the worthiest judges in courts of love, we willingly leave to our fair friends its decision. Twenty wandering knights were riding together in "horrible" weather, far from any place of hospitality; two barons, who were riding by in great haste to visit their ladies, heard these knights lamenting to one another that they were without shelter, and knew not where to find one; one of the barons returned to succour the wandering and friendless knights, but the other turned a deaf ear to the knights, and continued on his way to his mistress: which of the two barons behaved best?

In general, poetry, as the language of homage in love, was the province of the suitor; but love sometimes made poets of the ladies also, and ten or twelve poetesses flourished in the latter half of the twelfth century, some of them persons of high rank, such as the countess of Provence, the countess of Dié, Clara d'Anduse, &c. Their compositions are marked by an imagery less laboured and striking, and by a tenderness of feeling more naïve, than those of the masculine troubadours. Clara d'Anduse (who, it must not be forgotten, was, like the others, a married lady) addresses a lover, whom some of her acquaintance had urged her to discard, in the following terms (we translate two couplets only):—

“Those who blame me and forbid me to love you, only render my heart more inclined to you, and greater the soft desire I have of you. There is not a man, let him be ever so much my enemy, whom I do not love if I hear him speak well of you; and he who speaks ill of you can neither say nor do anything more to please me.

“ Ah ! fair *ami*, fear not that my heart shall ever deceive you, or that I will ever have another lover, were there a hundred ladies who urged me to it. Love, which holds me your captive, ordains that I preserve you in my heart in secret ; I keep it for you, and if I could steal away also my body, he who now holds it should never have it again.”

The songs of the trobadours strike us at once by a remarkable facility in the management of rhymes, and by their perfect and harmonious versification, at a period when the poetry of other parts of Europe was extremely rude. But the great mass of poetry thus devoted to the one subject of love, naturally produced a constant repetition of the same ideas, and led to a continual straining after novelty, in order to diversify the mode of expressing them. It would, indeed, be no easy task at any time to vary the praise of the same object a hundred different times. The love poetry of the trobadours becomes thus wearisome by its sameness when collected together. Yet here and there we find the tenderest sentiments expressed, delicately and poetically, presenting a singular contrast to the rough and turbulent character of the twelfth century, as it is represented in history.

“ When I see the green grass and the leaf bud forth,” says the trobadour Bernard to the viscountess of Ventadour, “ and the flowers open in the fields, when the nightingale raises its voice high and clear, and bestirs itself to sing, I am happy of the nightingale and of the flowers, I am happy of myself, and more happy of my lady ; I am on all parts enveloped, laden with joy ; but joy of love passes all others. . . .

“ If I had the power to enchant the world, I would transform my enemies into children, in order that

none of them might be able to imagine anything to the hurt of my lady or of myself. I would then contemplate at my leisure her beauty, her ruddy colour, and her beautiful eyes. I would kiss her on all points of her mouth, and so ardently that the mark would appear a month afterwards."

In another song, the same poet says to his lady: "The sweet song of the birds in the grove soothes me and brings back my heart; and since the birds have their reason for singing, well may I also sing; I who have greater joy than they, I whose days are all days of singing and joy, I who dream of nothing else. . . .

"At night, when I make myself ready for my bed, I know well that I shall not sleep: I lose my sleep, I lose it in thinking of you, O my lady! There where a man has his treasure, he will have his heart; thus do I myself; thus have I placed in you all my care and all my thoughts."

Arnaud de Marveil, another troubadour of the latter half of the twelfth century, was one of the poets of the olden time whose compositions were especially admired by Petrarch. Arnaud, although, like others of the more distinguished of his profession, born of parents in a low walk of life, was the accepted lover of the countess of Beziers, of whom he says, in one of his pieces:—

"When my lady speaks to me and looks on me, the brightness of her eyes and the sweetness of her breath penetrate together into my heart; and there rises to my lips a deliciousness such as I feel cannot come from my nature; it can only spring from love, which has fixed its dwelling in my heart."

In another poem, when he appears to have offended the countess by an indiscretion, he says:—

“Fair lady, well did you kill me the day when you gave me a kiss, which has left in my heart an eternal trouble. But greater was my folly when I boasted of the kiss; and I deserved to be torn to pieces by horses. O sweet object! mercy for the culpable! Restore me to joy and to hope; for I shall be a creature of nothing in the world, until the day when I shall again be allowed to serve you.”

Arnaud de Marveil long enjoyed the love of the beautiful countess, until king Alfonso, of Aragon, saw and became enamoured of her; and he, jealous of the trobadour, prevailed upon her to break off her connection with him. It is said of Arnaud, that he was one of the small number of trobadours known to have confined his love to one object. His contemporary, Hugues Brunet, loved a lady of Aurillac, who at first encouraged his suit, and then, for some reason or other, refused to listen to him. Hugues composed some pathetic pieces, in which he sung his grief, and then retired to a monastery and died. In one of his songs, composed when his love was not hopeless, he says:—

“Let my lady remember me in her heart: for the rest I will wait, provided only that looks and sighs may kiss each other, in order that the amorous desire may not be repulsed.”

Folquet de Marseilles was one of the most celebrated of the trobadours, and, although his father was only a merchant of the city from which he took his name, was distinguished by the friendship of the lion-hearted king Richard. He was also high in favour with Alfonso II., king of Aragon, Alfonso VII., king of Castile, and Raymond V., count of Toulouse; but he lived almost entirely at the court

of Barral de Baux, lord of Marseilles. Barral's lady was Azalaïs de Roche-Martine, and to her Folquet, although himself married, offered his love, and she was the object of nearly all his poetry that has come down to us. But, for reasons which are differently explained, he lost the good graces of the lady, and was forbidden to sing of her any more. In the midst of his chagrin, Azalaïs died, and shortly afterwards her husband followed her to the grave. King Richard, Alfonso of Aragon, and the count of Toulouse were also dead; and Folquet, disgusted with the world, retired to the monastery of Toronet, of which he was made abbot in the year 1200. The poetry of Folquet de Marseilles is distinguished by a greater degree of mannerism than appeared in that of his predecessors. His pieces are all in the same style, with little variety of sentiment or expression, consisting in general of affected and tiresome apostrophes to love. In fact, the poetry of the troubadours was already on the decline. A single stanza of Folquet de Marseilles will be enough:—

“Mercy! love, mercy! do not make me die so often, since you can kill me with a single blow. You make me to live and to die at the same time, and thus double my martyrdom. Nevertheless, although half dead, I remain faithful to your service, and I find it still a thousand times preferable to the recompenses which I should find in another.”

We must not be surprised if the troubadours themselves at times became weary of making love in this formal and affected manner, and if they sometimes sought relaxation among country maidens. This was what they called, very expressively, *joie de chambre en pâturage*. Adventures of this kind became the

subject of pieces of a pastoral character, in which a knight riding into the country meets with a pretty shepherdess, descends from his horse, and seats himself by her and makes love, sometimes successfully, while at others his advances are resolutely opposed, and sometimes the damsel is obliged to call a party of shepherds to her assistance. In these pieces, perhaps from a sentiment of *bienséance*, in deference to the more polite and refined love code of the day, the shepherdesses are often painted somewhat in the style of those who figure in the dull, prudish novels of the age which followed the publication of "Astrée." Sometimes, however, the loves of the knights and the shepherdesses are described in very plain and unequivocal language.

As we have seen trobadours quit their profession and retire to the cloister, so we find others who left the cloister to devote themselves to love and poetry. Among the most remarkable of these was a singular personage, known only in history by the epithet of the monk of Montaudon. His father was a gentleman of the neighbourhood of Aurillac, in Auvergne, who placed him while young in the famous monastery of that town. Very soon after he took the habit, he was made, perhaps by family interest, prior of the dependent monastery of Montaudon. In this position he gave free scope to his natural inclination for composing poetry and living joyously, and the extreme gaiety and vigour of his pieces, which were mostly satires on the manners and events of the day, made him a welcome guest at the tables of the barons and knights of the surrounding country. As his fame increased, he was loaded with gifts, and, careless himself of money, he gave all he gained to his monas-

tery, which, from a poor house, soon became rich by his means; and, in return, the abbot of Aurillac granted him, at his own request, a dispensation to lead in future the kind of life which should be prescribed to him by the king of Aragon. This monarch, who was a great lover of the troubadours, and was probably well acquainted with the character and inclinations of the monk, ordered him to live in the world, to make good cheer, to compose verses, to sing, and to love the ladies; and the king's commands were obeyed to the letter. Most of the monk of Montaudon's poetry is satirical, and often grotesque. In one of these, which, as M. Fauriel observes, possesses something Aristophanic in its character, the monk describes himself as present in the court of Paradise, where different creatures are pleading against each other before the Creator. Among the rest, the vaults and walls of houses come to make their complaint against the ladies, who used so much paint for their faces, that none was left to paint them. The pleading is carried on with obstinacy, and the satire is of a coarse cast, but the ladies in the end gain their object. It appears that painting was a general practice among the ladies at this period.

The troubadours entered upon the crusades against the Saracens with no great zeal, and those who left their country to join in these distant expeditions rejoiced more at their return than at their departure. Some of the more eager of the crusaders complained bitterly of the facility with which the barons and knights of the *midi* found excuses for remaining at home. One had a young wife; another had children to attend to and protect; a third was sick, or imagined he was. Some made the supineness of their supe-

riors an excuse for their own; others thought that the service of their ladies was more important than that claimed by the church. Even the turbulent war-loving Bertrand de Born, in a song addressed to Conrad de Montferrat (then actively engaged in Syria resisting Saladin), says, "I should have been there with you, if the delays of counts, dukes, princes, and kings, had not obliged me to renounce my project. And since that I have seen my beautiful lady, and *I have lost all inclination to go!*" This general disinclination to take part in the war in the East arose from no prejudice in favour of peace and tranquillity, for the troubadours loved war passionately, and were constantly engaged in those petty hostilities between baron and baron which characterised this period of feudal history. Many of their war-songs furnish strange pictures of a turbulent and licentious age. Bernard Arnaud, of Mantua, a troubadour knight of the latter half of the twelfth century, attached to the service of the court of Toulouse, says, in one of his pieces:—

"Spring never arrives so beautiful for me as when it comes accompanied with uproar and war, with trouble and alarm, with great inroads and great plundering. Many a one who previously had done nothing but give counsel and sleep, then rushes forward courageously, his arm raised to strike.

"I love to see the herdsmen and shepherds wandering about the fields, in such trouble that not one of them knows where to seek refuge. I love to see the rich barons obliged to squander that of which they have been niggard and sparing. He then is eager to give who never had a thought of giving before; and many a one then honours the poor man

who used to despise him. War forces every bad lord to become good to his people."

Another troubadour of the same age, named Blacasset, in a song urging two lords to decide a quarrel by force of arms, in which he does not conceal his intention of joining, exclaims:—

"War pleases me; I love to see it begin! It is by war that brave men raise themselves; war helps them to pass their nights; war brings them gifts of handsome steeds; it forces the miser to become liberal; it obliges people to give and to take. War is a good dispenser of justice; it pleases me, without end and without truce.

"Oh! when shall I see, in fair field, our adversaries and ourselves drawn out in close lines, so that at the first fine shock there may be many overthrown on both sides? There many servants shall be cut to pieces, many horses killed, many knights wounded. If nobody ever returns from it, I care not: I shall feel no sorrow; I had rather die than live without honour."

"If," says Bertrand de Born, with the prospect before him of a war between Richard Cœur-de-Lion and the king of France—"if the two kings are brave and valiant, we shall soon see the fields strewed with fragments of helms and shields, of swords and saddles, of breast pieces cloven down to the girdle. We shall see steeds wandering about loose, with lances hanging to their flanks and breasts; we shall hear laughing and weeping: the cry of distress, and the cry of joy; great will be the losses, immense will be the gain.

"Trumpets and drums, standards, banners, and ensigns, horses white and black; in the midst of these

we shall live! Oh! the good time there will be then! Then we shall plunder the usurers; we shall then see on the roads neither baggage-horse safe, nor burgher who does not tremble, nor merchant coming from France; then he will be rich who has the courage to take."

Bertrand de Born was perhaps, without exception, the most turbulent baron of his day. From his castle in Périgueux, he was perpetually at war with the various feudal lords whose territories surrounded his own, and he was as constantly occupied in setting his neighbours by the ears among themselves. In his youth, his brother had attempted to deprive him of his estates, and Bertrand was only saved by the protection given to him by Henry II. of England. He showed his gratitude afterwards by allowing no opportunity to escape of stirring up war between that monarch and his undutiful sons, sometimes allying himself with one party, and sometimes with the other. He seems to have been distinguished chiefly by a wild unbridled love of war and confusion. Yet the old biographers of the troubadours say that Bertrand "was a good knight, a good warrior, a good troubadour, a good lover of the ladies, well instructed and skilful in speaking, and he knew well how to govern himself in good and bad fortune." The enemy of everybody has everybody for his foe; and it does not appear that Bertrand de Born was often left in peace, even had he desired it. In one of his *sirventes*, or satirical pieces, he says—

"I am obliged every day to be at war, to stir me, to defend myself, to put myself out of breath. On every side they burn and ravage my lands, they root up my trees, they disforest my woods, they mix my grain with

my straw; and I have not an enemy, either coward or brave, who does not come forward to attack me."

In another, he expresses his contempt for all his neighbours who were inclined to be peaceful:—

"I make another sirvente against our degenerate barons; for you will never hear me praise them. I have broken more than a thousand spurs upon them, without being able to make one of them run or trot. They let themselves be despoiled without complaining! Oh! may God curse them, our barons! And what do they intend to do then? There is not one of them, but you might shear and shave him like a monk, or shoe him on four feet without shackles for his legs!"

As old age approached, Bertrand de Born, like so many others, was seized with repentance for the numerous crimes of his turbulent life, and he became a monk, and ended his days in a monastery.

The last war-cries of the troubadours were raised loudly and fiercely against the French invaders of their liberties. Of these, as of all the remains of their warlike poetry, it is difficult to give extracts, because they are so full of local and temporary historical allusions, that it would require a page to explain each passage. The French influence was always disagreeable to the Provençals, and their poetry has preserved many a bitter testimony of their hatred for the government of Charles of Anjou. Boniface de Castellane was a small feudal lord and troubadour, who resisted the count of Anjou to the last, both as a warrior and as a poet, and his sirventes were well calculated, by their vigour and violence, to spread abroad the spirit of opposition. When Boniface shut himself up in his own castle, he issued the following poetic manifesto:

“Although the season be not gay, I will compose a sirvente in biting words, against the recreants and the perverse. The French leave neither breech nor coin to these poor and sorrowful Provençals, to the cowardly and vile race.

“From some they take their lands, and that without even showing them the favour to leave them their money. Others, knights and servants, they send them prisoners to the Tower of Blaie, as they would vile bandits: and if they die there, all the better for the French who seize upon their goods.

“The cowards and traitors have deserted me with their false servants. I give myself no sorrow about it: I shall be none the weaker on that account. I will hold good in my fortress with my brave men, and I care little if the count comes against me with his numerous forces.

“Whoever kills, shall die, says the Gospel; the day will come, then, when the count shall suffer for that which he inflicts upon others.

“Let his gaolers come and make war upon me, and I will send them back in sorrow and mortification. I will stain my sword with their blood, and upon them I will make of my lance a short staff.”

The count of Anjou, in his resentment, laid siege to Boniface's castle, took it, and immediately hanged the trobadour.

Such was the literature of the trobadours, or poets of the south of what is now called France; a literature totally distinct in its character from that of any other country at the same period of history. We have described it according to its two divisions of love-songs and war or political songs, of which the minor

classes of poetry peculiar to this literature are but varieties. It must be understood, however, that contemporary with these there existed a large class of poetical compositions which were common to Provence with other countries of the West. The minstrel was a person who wandered over many lands, and, at the period when minstrelsy was most honoured, he had often learnt, in the course of his travels, several languages. We trace the Christian minstrel sometimes wandering among the Arabs, as at times we find the Arab minstrel among the Christians of the West. They were a class of persons received everywhere gladly, because they not only furnished amusement wherever they came, but they imparted knowledge, as they were the great carriers of news from one country to another. It was by their intermediation that the West received so many of the stories and traditions of the East. The languages of France, of Provence, and of the superior classes of society in England, as well as those of Italy and the Christian portions of the Spanish peninsula, were, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, only so many dialects of one tongue; and the minstrel easily changed the dialect of the poetry he had to recite into that of his hearers. It is thus that we still sometimes find in early manuscripts, the same piece written in one manuscript in the dialect of France or in Anglo-Norman, and in another manuscript in Provençal, leaving it in some instances doubtful to which of the languages or dialects it originally belonged, while in other cases this is only known by some accidental circumstance. We thus find a considerable variety of literary productions in the Provençal language, which do not strictly belong to it; and there were also, doubtless, writers

in the south of France who employed their talents in the same styles of composition as those for which their brethren in the north were distinguished.

The poetry which we have been describing seems to have belonged so essentially to a peculiar state of society, that we find comparatively few traces or even imitations of it in the literature of France or England. It was most successfully imitated by the minnesingers of Germany, whither somewhat of the spirit of Provençal society was carried early in the thirteenth century. It was not, as we have already observed, till a later period, after it had ceased to resound in the country which gave it birth, that this poetry exerted its great influence on the literature of Europe, and that rather indirectly than directly.

The final decline of the poetry of Provence is easily accounted for. The war against the Albigeois destroyed the condition of society which chiefly supported it. The inquisition was brought in in place of the courts of love; and the papal authority, now become paramount, had many reasons for discouraging those troubadours, who were then placed, towards the Church, much in the same position which the Welsh bards are traditionally represented as holding towards Edward I., in his invasions of Wales. A still more effective cause of this decadence may be seen in the proscription of the language which followed the establishment of the French domination, when French became the only dialect fashionable among the higher classes of society in the south, and Provençal was degraded to be the mere conversational dialect of the vulgar. From this moment, the poetry listened to most favourably in the baronial-hall was that brought by the minstrels of the north.

I have, as yet, hardly mentioned the “*Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*” of the late M. Fauriel, which has chiefly given rise to the foregoing observations, my object being only to give an accurate notion of what that poetry really was. I have taken this book as a heap of materials—good and bad—ready to my hand. The name of Fauriel had been long known in the literature of France, and endeared to his personal acquaintance (among whom I rejoiced to reckon myself) by his great amenity of temper and other amiable qualities. He was a man of considerable taste, and of extensive, but not very profound, reading; but deficient in critical judgment, and apt to form hasty conclusions from very inconclusive evidence. His reputation as a literary man was first made by a collection of the popular songs of modern Greece, published in 1824. Himself an *homme du midi*, he subsequently devoted his energies to the investigation and illustration of the history and literature of the south of France, and published, in 1836, a “*Histoire de la Gaule Méridionale*,” in four octavo volumes. In 1831 he had been chosen to fill the newly-established professorship of foreign literature, at the Sorbonne; and it was in that capacity that he delivered a series of lectures on the literature of Provence. These lectures, collected together since his death, by one of his friends to whom he has left his papers, form the book mentioned above; and, after perusing it carefully, I am inclined to think that it would have been better for the author’s literary memory had they still remained unpublished. My personal recollections of the man would lead me to pass in silence over the errors of his book; but they are of too grave a character to be allowed to be spread

abroad under so honourable a name, and to be rendered more mischievous by the injudicious admiration of some critics, who have praised such a work without understanding its merits. It is a book, too, which contains much valuable matter—more, probably, than any existing work on the same subject, and written in the same popular style—although ill-arranged and ill-digested.

Professing to give a history of the poetry of Provence, M. Fauriel has included in his work not only that which was peculiarly the poetry of the troubadours, but also that which we have just described as imported from northern France. To this, we have, of course, no objection, had the different circumstances connected with the history of each class been carefully and accurately stated; but the strong prejudices of the author led him to form the paradoxical opinion that the whole body of this literature was purely Provençal, and that Provence was the birth-place and nursery of the literature of almost all other countries. The long metrical romances of the middle ages, as well as the shorter popular stories known in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the title of *Fabliaux*, and, indeed, every other class of mediæval poetry, were, according to the system of M. Fauriel, of Provençal origin. In his zeal to establish this favourite position, the lecturer of the Sorbonne neglects or confounds dates and facts, takes his own suppositions and misconceptions as evidence, repeats old erroneous statements which have been disproved and exploded over and over again in our modern increased knowledge of mediæval antiquities, and consequently produces a treatise which is disfigured by a multitude, not only of indefinite and confused

statements, but of downright blunders. We need only mention, to show our readers how little trust can be placed in the accuracy of M. Fauriel's "*Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*," that, to support some strange theory relating to the origin of the German national romances, he heedlessly confounds the ancient Edda with the younger Edda, and makes his own error the foundation of his subsequent arguments.

Among the poems recited by the minstrels, and thus carried from one land to another, were the lengthy metrical romances so much in vogue during the middle ages, which were founded sometimes on the imaginary annals of king Arthur and his knights; at others, on the traditionary histories of the wars and feuds of the earlier Frankish races of kings; and at others again, on mythic stories, taken from ancient fable, and a variety of kindred subjects. These romances are very numerous, and many of them are very long; the greater proportion, at least, were, no doubt, composed in France, and they are found in manuscripts, written in Anglo-Norman and in various French dialects, according to the district in which they happened to be committed to writing, either from other copies, or from the mouth of the minstrel. The number and character of the variations found in different copies of the same romance, show that they must have been frequently taken down from oral recitation. Some half-dozen of these romances are found written in the Provençal tongue; and M. Fauriel immediately arrives at the conclusion that not only these, but all other romances of the same stamp, were invented by the troubadours, and that this class of compositions also was imitated and copied

from them by the poets of the north. Even the cycle of king Arthur and his Round Table is not excepted. Not only is this extraordinary theory utterly unsupported by any evidence better than the various suppositions of the author, but it happens to be a notorious fact, that all these Provençal romances but two are found repeatedly in manuscripts written in French of an earlier date than the single copies written in Provençal, and that they there occur in the same words, making allowance for the difference of dialects, and for the usual various readings of manuscripts. The two romances which are exceptions to this belong to the same class of fictions, and are composed in much the same style, so that there is very little room for doubt that all the Provençal romances are mere copies from the French romances. The allusions to so many of these compositions found in the genuine poetry of the trobadours is easily explained, by the rapidity with which we know that the taste for the French romances was spread over neighbouring countries by the wandering minstrels. They were translated into German, almost, if not quite, at as early a period as into Provençal.

M. Fauriel perpetrates a still greater absurdity in the attempt to prove that even the national romances of Germany originated in his favourite Provence. With this object, he actually gives a place in his book to a long analysis and to a dissertation on the history of the celebrated romance of the "Niebelungen," which he follows previous writers in supposing (with probability enough) to have been compiled from older popular ballads; but he seems to imagine that these popular ballads came from the south of France, with-

out, however, stating any kind of admissible evidence for such a supposition. No less than three or four long chapters are also devoted to the curious early Latin poem of Waltharius, or, as it is here entitled, "Walter of Aquitaine," a romance closely connected with the German cycle of the "Niebelungen." This M. Fauriel pronounces to be an undoubted production of a Provençal writer of the tenth century, and he pretends to discover in the idioms of his language proofs that his mother-tongue was no other than Provençal. But when he comes to state his reasons for this appropriation, we find him falling into the same confusion of blundering citations and erroneous interpretations which occur so frequently in other parts of the book. "There is now," he says, "no need of further conjecture on the subject. Two new manuscripts of the poem in question recently discovered, one in Belgium in the municipal library of Brussels, the other in the royal library at Paris, have made known with certainty the author of this composition. The manuscript of Brussels points out as the author a monk of the abbey of Fleury, or Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire; and this indication is confirmed and developed by the manuscript in the royal library. In this last, the text of the poem is preceded by a dedication of twenty-two dull and half-barbarous Leonine verses. The author of this poem speaks of himself as the author of the poem, and describes himself by the name of Gerald. Without expressly calling himself a monk, he says enough to lead us to conclude that he was one. Gerald dedicates his work to a brother of his, whom he names Archambauld (Erkambaldus), and to whom he gives the title of bishop. Thus it remains clearly and fully established

that the poem of Walther of Aquitaine was composed on the banks of the Loire, on the confines of the Frankish Gaul and the Aquitaine of the middle ages, and that it was composed by a monk named Gerald, of whom everything announces that the maternal idiom was a *romane* (Neo-Latin) idiom, and rather that of the south than that of the north." It would hardly be believed, if the facts were not before the eyes of everybody who chooses to look at them, that the dedication here made so much of, which is found in the two manuscripts of Brussels and Paris, states no more than simply that the author was a monk named Gerald, or Gerard, and that he dedicated his book to a bishop named Erkambald, without the slightest allusion to assist in fixing the country to which either of these personages belonged. M. Fauriel, in calling the monk the brother of the bishop, has mistranslated the Latin of the original:—

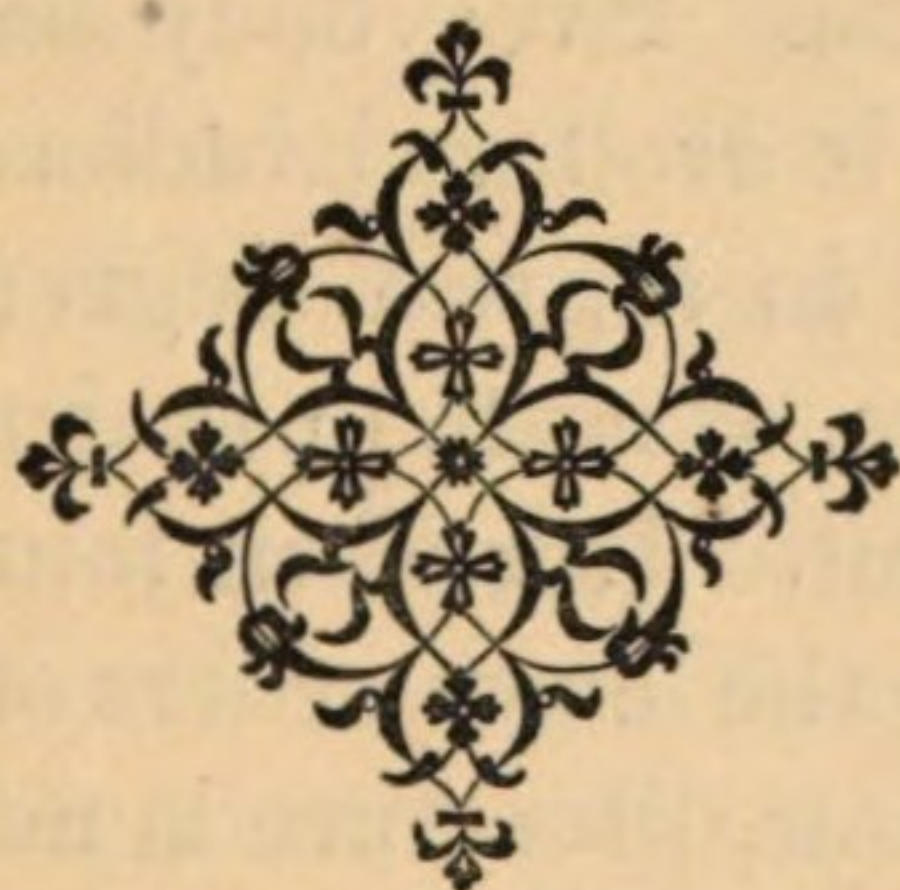
“Sis felix, sanctus per tempora plura sacerdos ;
Sit tibi mente tua Geraldus carus *adelphus*.”

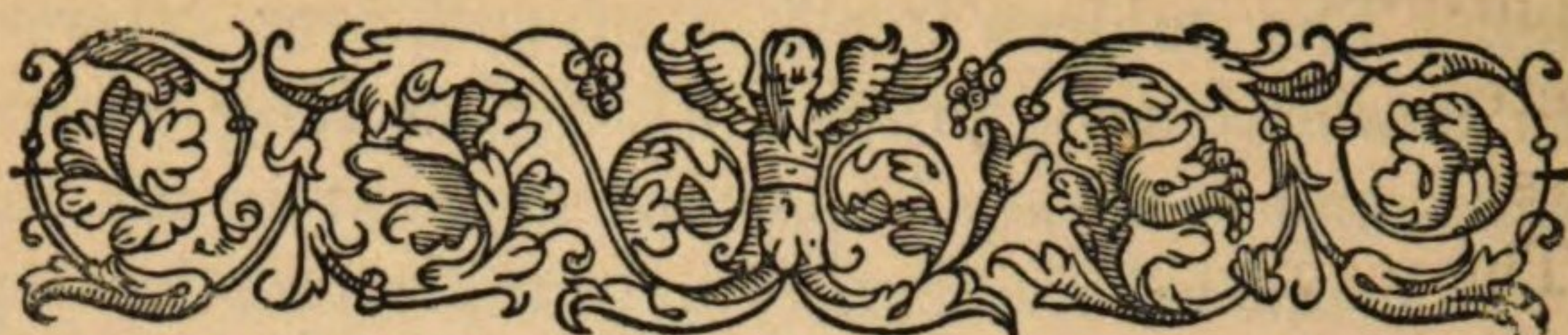
The word *adelphus*, in the Latin of the age to which this poem belongs, was used simply to designate a monk (*frater*); and is thus a distinct statement of the author's sacred profession, which M. Fauriel supposed was only to be presumed by indirect implication. M. Fauriel had concealed from his readers, or he had overlooked (which is equally unpardonable), the fact that the statement that Gerald or Gerard was connected with the abbey of Fleury, instead of being (as he says) found in the Brussels manuscript, was the mere hasty and improbable conjecture of some one who, at a much later period, wrote in the fly-leaf

of the Parisian manuscript, that perhaps this Gerard was St. Gerard, monk of Fleury. There are good reasons, on the contrary, for supposing that the author of the Latin poem of "Waltharius" was a monk of St. Gall, and there is scarcely room for doubting a moment that it was written by a German, and founded upon German traditions. Thus, between the "Niebelungen" and "Waltharius," M. Fauriel has composed nearly one-half of his first volume of materials altogether foreign to his subject.

In his anxiety thus to enlarge the field and influence of Provençal literature, M. Fauriel has striven to reconcile dates by giving to that literature a much earlier existence than is warranted by any historical facts. It is quite clear, from what remains, that the poetry of the troubadours was only rising into existence at the beginning of the twelfth century, when there was a contemporary poetry equally extensive existing in France, and another in Germany; that the period at which that poetry flourished was the latter half of the twelfth century; and that it was already declining at the beginning of the thirteenth. It is equally clear that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the poetry of northern France was carried to Provence by the French minstrels, and taken from them by the minstrels of the south. I have several times heard it whispered that an English translation of M. Fauriel's book is or was in preparation, under the impression that it was a capital work; the subject is sufficiently interesting to be treated in a better manner, and if it should ever be translated, I sincerely hope that it may fall into the hands of somebody who understands it sufficiently well to be able to correct the errors by numerous

notes. The subject itself is of sufficient interest, both as a national literature which has long become extinct, and as a very important element in the history of mediæval civilization and intellectual development, to merit a better treatment, and to form the object of an original work.





XXIII.

ON THE HISTORY OF COMIC LITERATURE
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.



HERE is no instrument of attack to which mankind is more universally sensible than ridicule. Everybody has a perception of what is droll and ludicrous. A taste for the humorous is in a great degree independent of national difference, of caste or rank, or even of education and refinement. It is often found in the greatest perfection among the lower orders of society. Hence the history of comic literature is not one of progressive improvement. But this branch of literature, more than any other, is affected and modified by the political circumstances of the age, or by the peculiar character of the people. It prevails least among tribes in a wild and unsocial state of life, as among wandering savages, or with the modern Oriental, who, in his closed serail, seeks for amusement that will flatter or excite his passions. There are people of that gloomy character who never laugh. On the other hand, it finds the greatest encouragement amid the turbulence of moral or political revolution. Hence

the history of this class of literature has a peculiar interest, not shared in an equal degree by any other class.

The materials for the history of comic and burlesque literature among the ancients are incomplete, for we know little of such productions as those of the Atellane and Fescennine muses, and of many other classes of popular compositions which were in vogue among the Greeks and Romans. We know still less of the history of this branch of literature among the Germanic tribes for ages after their settlement in the imperial provinces, but the earlier mediæval compositions of this description appear in general to have been imitations of Roman models. The wit or ingenuity of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers was chiefly exerted in playing upon words, one of the worst blemishes of mediæval taste; and their literary amusement seems to have consisted principally in guessing at the meaning of riddles, of which a great variety are still preserved. Puns and riddles are indeed, as far as we know, the only comic forms to be discovered in the Anglo-Saxon writers. It is not until after the entrance of the Normans that we find any traces in England of what is properly termed satire. In the life of the Saxon Hereward, we see the Norman knights in their baronial hall listening to their jongleur or minstrel, while he turned to ridicule, by his coarse and indecent satire and his comic gestures, the manners of the people whom they had dispossessed of their lands.*

From this time forward we have abundant proof of the prevalence and increasing popularity of com-

* "De Gestis Herwardi Saxonis," c. 14, in the "Chroniques Anglo-Normandes," vol. ii. p. 41.

positions of a satirical character, which were nourished into vigour by the violent struggle between the ecclesiastical and secular powers, in which the latter laid bare with unsparing knife the wickedness of the Romish system in all its workings. A Latin rhymer of the tenth century did not scruple to turn into ridicule the popish purgatory legends, in a burlesque narrative of a man who had been in Paradise, and had seen John the Baptist acting as butler, and his namesake, the Evangelist, performing the part of cup-bearer, while St. Peter held the office of master of the cooks. Another Latin poet, of the earlier part of the twelfth century, boldly charges Rome with worshipping silver like the pagans of old, and with devouring, in her insatiate greediness, the riches of every country which acknowledged the supremacy of the papal see:—

“Gens Romanorum subdola antiqua colit idola.

* * * *

Ornatas vestes Græciæ, ebur cum gemmis Indiæ,
Deliciosa Franciæ, argentum, aurum Angliæ,
Lac et butyrum Flandriæ, mulas, mulos Burgundiæ,
Roma deglutit penitus, digna perire funditus.”

After boasting at length of its all-powerful influence, and the mode in which that influence was exerted, the papal see is made to sum up its actions:—

“Quæcunque volo facio ; ego nuptas decipio ;
Ego corrumpo virgines ; edomo cunctos homines.”

Such satires as these, it must be remarked, came from the pen of ecclesiastics, who scorned to imitate the larger body of their brethren in pandering to the support of a system of which the vice was apparent to every one. Some of the adventurous satirists of

this early age are guilty of parodying scriptural language in a manner which, not many years ago, might have subjected them to a criminal prosecution. We give a translation of one of the shortest and least objectionable of these, as a curious proof of the opinion of the scandalous venality of the court of Rome in the twelfth century, at which period it was written. It was a famous joke among the satirical reformers of that age, that the pope had mistaken *Mark*, the evangelist, for a *mark* of money:—

“ The beginning of the holy gospel according to a mark of silver.

“ In that time the pope said to the Romans, ‘ When the son of man shall come to the seat of our majesty, first say to him, “ Friend, for what comest thou ? ” And if he shall continue knocking, without giving you anything, cast him out into utter darkness.’ And it came to pass that a certain poor clerk came to the court of our lord the pope, and cried out saying, ‘ Have pity on me, you, gate-keepers of the pope, for the hand of poverty hath touched me, and I am poor and needy, therefore I pray that you will relieve me in my misfortune and wretchedness.’ But they, hearing this, were very indignant, and said, ‘ Friend, thy poverty be with thee in perdition ; go behind, Sathanas, for thou art not wise in the wisdom of money. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not enter into the joy of thy lord until thou hast given the last farthing.’ And the poor man went away and sold his cloak and his tunic and all he had, and gave the money to the cardinals and to the gate-keepers, and they said, ‘ What is this among so many of us ? ’ And they cast him out at the door. And having gone out, he wept bitterly, and had no consolation. And after-

wards there came to the court a certain rich clerk, fat and pursy and swollen, who had seditiously committed homicide. This man gave first to the gatekeeper, secondly to the chamberlain, thirdly to the cardinals; but they judged among themselves that they were going to receive more. But our lord the pope hearing that his cardinals and ministers had received many gifts from the clerk, became sick unto death. Then the rich man sent him a medicine of gold and silver, and immediately he was healed. Then our lord the pope called to him the cardinals and ministers, and said to them, ‘Brethren, take heed lest any one seduce you with *empty* words; for I set you an example, in order that, as I take, so also take ye.’ ”

This singular scrap of early satire has been printed in a very curious collection of early Latin poetry, published at Paris by M. Edélestand du Méril. Pieces of this kind are not very uncommon at the end of the twelfth and during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A parody on the service of the mass, under the title of “*Missa de Potatoribus*,” the Mass of the Drunkards, is printed in the second volume of the “*Reliquiæ Antiquæ* ;” and a shorter parody will be found in the same collection, commencing with the words, “*Initium sancti Evangelii secundum Lupum. Fraus tibi, Bacche*,” and continued in the same strain. *Lupum* is, of course, a play on *Lucam*, and *fraus* a similar play upon *laus*. These were the amusements of Romish clergy !

As we advance in the twelfth century, the satirical writers against the Romish church become extremely numerous. Walter Mapes gained celebrity by his jokes and stories against the monastic orders; and

the same period produced several larger publications, of a satirical character, directed against the corruptions of the age in general, but more especially against those of the Church of Rome. Among the most remarkable, and the most extensively popular, were the poem "De Contemptu Mundi," of Bernard of Morlaix, and the "Speculum Stultorum" of our own countryman, Nigellus Wireker. Perhaps we should enumerate in the same class the still more comprehensive "Architrenius" of John de Hauteville, except that in this instance the reforming hero goes about weeping over the vices of mankind, instead of laughing at them.

The first century and a half after the Norman conquest present us with few specimens of playful humour in the literature of this country; but this is easily explained by the loss of the great mass of the popular literature of the middle ages, previous to the thirteenth century. In the twelfth century, however, we begin to perceive among the Latin writers that taste for comic stories which became so prevalent in the century following, and of which some scattered instances occur at an earlier period, as in the Latin ballad of "Unibos" (published in Grimm and Schmeller's collection of early Latin poetry), and one or two other poems of the same stamp. The clergy of the twelfth century amused themselves with composing what they designated by the title of *Comedies*, consisting of licentious tales, with a comic *dénouement*, written most frequently in elegiac verse. Such are the "Geta" of Vitalis of Blois, the "Alda" of William of Blois, and the "Babio" of an anonymous writer. The celebrated Peter of Blois condemns these vain labours of his brother William, although he acknowledges having written similar poems in his youth;

and his judgment was certainly not unsupported by reason, for the "Alda" of William of Blois is a piece of undisguised obscenity.

We have hitherto found the comic literature of the middle ages, as being written in Latin, confined chiefly to the clergy, or learned class of society. But it was rapidly making its way among the laity of the higher class, who spoke the French or Anglo-Norman tongue. The first comic production with which we are acquainted, written in Anglo-Norman, is the poem on Charlemagne's pretended voyage to Jerusalem and Constantinople, which was printed a few years ago in this country, and published by Mr. Pickering. In this poem the barons of Charlemagne's court are represented as passing their evenings in making *gabs* or jokes; on one occasion, at Constantinople, amid their *gabs*, they boast of extravagant and ridiculous feats which each pretends he is capable of performing, and the emperor, who has been made acquainted with their conversation by means of a spy, and who seeks an occasion of quarrelling with his unwelcome visitors, threatens them with death, unless each boaster perform the feat of which he had so indiscreetly vaunted. They escape the danger, partly by miracles, and partly by cunning and opportune accidents, so that each performs, or appears to have performed, his feat. This incident of the barons *gabbing* and joking at their evening assemblies, is probably a correct picture of the social manners of the end of the twelfth century. We meet with several instances of the popularity at this period of individuals distinguished by their wit, an example of which is afforded in the person of Walter Mapes. But the great composers and publishers of French and Anglo-

Norman comic literature in this and the succeeding age were the jongleurs, or minstrels, who were the constant attendants in the baronial hall after the festive meal, and the form of this literature was most generally that of tales or fabliaux.

These fabliaux are historically of great value, as faithful pictures of the private and public manners in the middle ages; but they are pointed with bitter satire, and are largely tainted with that extraordinary licentiousness which prevailed in the middle ages. The immense number of these fabliaux which still remain shows what an extensive class of literature they once formed. Too many of them turn on subjects at which the modesty of the present day will not allow us to hint. In others, of a character somewhat less objectionable, the grossness of the story is redeemed in a certain degree by its exquisite humour. Others again are burlesques and parodies, or pieces of a merely playful character, although even these not unfrequently conceal a satirical aim. Examples of all these different classes will be found in the collections of Barbazan, Méon, and Jubinal. We meet sometimes even with literary satires among these productions; the coarse story of Audigier, in the fourth volume of Barbazan, is a burlesque upon the tedious and extravagant romances of that age. M. Jubinal has published, under the title of "Fatrasies and Resveries," two poems, consisting of words thrown together without any connected sense, in the style of certain pleadings in "maister" Rabelais, which were, without doubt, intended to turn to ridicule the unmeaning compositions of some of the writers of the time: the following lines, from the middle of one of these poems, will best show their style:—

"Li ombres d'un oef
 Portoit l'an reneuf
 Sus le fonz d'un pot ;
 Deus viez pingé neuf
 Firent un estuef
 Pour courre le trot ;
 Quant vint au paier l'escot,
 Je, qui omques ne me muef,
 M'escriai, si ne dis mot :—
 Prenés la plume d'un buéf,
 S'en vestez un sage sot," &c.

"The shadow of an egg
 Carried the new year
 Upon a pot bottom ;
 Two old new combs
 Made a ball
 To run the trot ;
 When it came to paying the scot,
 I, who never move myself,
 Cried out, without saying a word :—
 Take the feather of an ox,
 And clothe with it a wise fool."
 Jubinal, "Nouv. Rec." ii. 217.

1) No class is more frequently the object of these satires than the women, whose general character in the middle ages appears to have been far from amiable. It naturally happens, that when society becomes corrupt and dissolute, the weaker sex is the most deeply tainted by the evil. The history of society in the middle ages shows us but too plainly the demoralising effects of the Romish church-system on the female character, particularly in the middle and lower classes. The clergy, whose duty it was to be preachers of virtue, are universally represented as the general corrupters of private morals. In the stories to which we are alluding, monks and priests are constantly introduced as actors in low intrigues ; and the general faults of the church are by no means spared. Sometimes the satirical poets enter upon religious subjects with remarkable temerity. In the story "Du Vilain qui conquist Paradis par plait," a peasant dies suddenly, and his soul escapes, at a moment when neither angel nor demon was on the watch, so that unclaimed and left to his own discretion, the peasant follows St. Peter, who happened to be on his way to Paradise, and enters the gate with him unperceived. When the saint finds that the soul of such a low person has found its way into Paradise, he is angry, and rudely orders the peasant out. But the latter

arts of the university learning are divided against themselves; the new authors and the men of science (*la haute science*) make war upon the ancients, or those who had been read and taught in the old grammar course, and the ancients take up arms in their own defence. The two armies meet in a plain near Orleans (the celebrated university in which city was firmly attached to the old course of study), and a dreadful engagement ensues, in which the different combatants perform feats worthy of the Homeric heroes; but the victory remained with the moderns, although the writer of the poem, Henri d'Andely, prognosticates that before long the old course of teaching would regain its former position. Henri d'Andely is said to be the author of another poem of a similar stamp, entitled "The Battle of the Wines." Comic pieces of this description were not uncommon: we have the battle of Caresme (Lent) and Charnage (the season when meat was allowed to be eaten), the debate between wine and water, the dispute between the eye and the heart, &c.

If we look to the Latin literature of the thirteenth century, which is extremely rich in comic and satiric verse, we see why the Romish church was jealous of the universities, and why so resolute and, in the sequel, so successful an attempt was made to push into them the monkish orders—the soldiers of the pope, as they have been aptly called—in order to suppress the freedom of study and of opinion. The universities were the nurseries in which grew up a crowd of writers who saw and boldly attacked the encroachments and the errors of Rome. In England this party was particularly strong; for our countrymen, with their sturdy spirit of freedom, have always

had the honour of being a little schismatical in face of the papacy; and the Anglo-Latin literature of this period teems with bold and energetic attacks on the disorders of the clergy. At the beginning of the thirteenth century—on the eve of the baronial wars—these writers had, in order perhaps to give a certain unity of character to their satire, set up an imaginary reformer of abuses, under the title of “Goliath,” or “Goliardus”—a reckless devourer, as the name indicates; a sort of clerical jongleur, who was licensed to say what he thought in whatever terms he liked. His pre-eminence above all other goliards or goliathes is frequently marked by the addition of the epithet *episcopus*. It was under the name of “Goliath Episcopus” that a very large mass of rhyming Latin verse, distinguished by its inveterate hostility to the then existing state of things, made its appearance during the thirteenth century. One of the most remarkable of these pieces was called the “Apocalypsis Goliathæ,” or Goliath’s Revelation: and if we may judge by its frequent occurrence in manuscripts of that age, it must have been widely popular in this country. The vices of the church are the things revealed to Goliath, and they are described in no sparing language. The spiritual pastor of those days, we are told, thought more of being fed by his flock, than of feeding it:—

“Non pastor ovium, sed pastus ovibus.”

“He thinks less of the sheep which are in want, or lame, or sick, or tender, than of the amount of milk and wool which he is to gain;—it is thus that he brings back the lost sheep on his shoulder:”—

“ Non tantum cogitat ille de miseris,
De claudis ovibus, ægris, vel teneris,
Quantum de compoto lactis et velleris;
Sic ovem perditam refert in numeris.”

The pope was the devouring lion, which spared nothing. The archdeacon was a robber on a smaller scale, who fixed his claws on whatever had escaped the rapacity of pope or prelate. The faults of the officials were too numerous to compress within a small volume:—

“ Hic scriptas repperi consuetudines
Officialium, raptus, voragines,
Fraudes, insidias, et turpitudines,
Quæ magni codicis excedunt margines.”

“ The world is struck with horror to see that such people continue to exist, and the earth trembles at the sight of them:—

“ Hi sunt quos retinens mundus inhorruit;
A quorum facie terra contremuit.”

The priest was infamous for vices of another description:—

“ Post missam presbyter, relinquens infulam,
In meretriculæ descendit insulam;
Sic fecit Jupiter, qui juxta fabulam
Cælum deseruit sequendo vitulam.

“ Hanc mulieribus proponit maximam,
Quod rerum decima non salvat animam;
Nulla salvabitur ad horam ultimam,
Nisi de corpore suo dat decimam.”

Abbots and their monks spent their lives in sensual indulgence; eating, and drinking, and chambering, were their principal occupations. The lines which follow lose in a translation:—

“ Quisquis de monacho fit dæmoniacus,
Et cuique monacho congarrit monachus,
Ut pica picæ, ut psittaco psittacus,
Cui dat ingenium magister stomachus.

“ His mola dentium tumorem faucium,
Lagena gutturis ventris diluvium,
Oris aculeus dat flammæ litium,
Et fratrum malleus calorem noxium.

“ Cum inter fabulas et Bacchi pocula
Modum et regulam suspendit crapula,
Dicunt quod dicitur favor a fabula,
Modus a modio, a gula regula.”

The details in this poem, and in the numerous other similar compositions, give us a fearful picture of the disorders of the clergy and the church; but the variety and unanimity of the documents, and the confessions even of the monkish writers most zealous in the cause of Rome, prove that the picture was not in any respect overdrawn. Whence sprang these disorders, and why could they not be remedied? The whole system was bad—the disease lay at the heart and the head. The vice of the head affected all the members:—

“ Membra dolent singula capitis dolore.

* * * *

Roma mundi caput est; sed nil capit mundum;
Quod pendit a capite totum est immundum;
Transit enim vitium primum in secundum,
Et de fundo redolet quod est juxta fundum.”

Volumes might be filled with the works of these vigorous satirists, which are preserved in manuscripts. They sometimes take part in the political disputes of the times, and become extremely active at the period of the barons' wars under Henry III. The long Latin rhyming poem on the battle of Lewes, printed

in my collection of political songs published by the Camden Society,* proclaims sentiments and principles worthy of the more advanced civilization of the present day. Sometimes these Latin poems become light and playful, and exhibit an ease and elegance which those who are not well acquainted with the spirit of the thirteenth century would not expect. We may give as an example the three first stanzas of a graceful song on the vanities of courts, written in the thirteenth century; and for the sake of such readers as have no care for the Latin, we will accompany it with a hasty metrical paraphrase, that may perhaps serve to give them some notice of the playful spirit of the original. The wearied and dissatisfied courtier says:—

“Rimatus omnes curias,
magnas, parvas, et medias,
episcopales, regias,
curiarum incurias,
multiformes et varias
dum video, irrideo;
nec ideo
a curiis abstineo,
sed ipsas semper adeo,
rimatus omnes curias.

“A courtier old, I know full well
The life a courtier leads,
'Round kings and nobles few will tell
The cares their station breeds;
But I despise the cringing bow,
The flaunting air remote from glad-
ness,
The hollow smile, provoked, I trow,
By pointless jest which covers sad-
ness;
Yet still I follow courts, although,
A courtier old, I know them well.

* It will save the trouble of particular reference, if I give here a list of the principal collections which contain the smaller pieces of the comic and satirical literature of this and the following age:—they are the collections of fabliaux, by Barbazan, Méon, and Jubinal; some of the other publications by M. Jubinal; the “Anecdota Literaria,” by the author of the present volumes; my “Early Mysteries, and other Latin Poems;” the two volumes of “Reliquiæ Antiquæ,” by Wright and Halliwell; the “Recueil de Chants Historiques Français,” by Leroux de Lincy; the “Poésies Populaires Latines,” by Edélestand de Ménil; and the “Political Songs of England,” the poems attributed to Walter Mapes, and the “Collection of Early Latin Stories,” all by the author of these volumes.

“ In curiis sublimibus
 in ipsis curialibus
 non est locus virtutibus,
 omnes putrescunt sordibus
 pusilli cum majoribus,
 incuria, malitia,
 fallacia,
 obsidet tanquam propria,
 virtuti præsunt vitia
 in curiis sublimibus.

“ Sublime tenent solium
 diplois adulantium,
 jugis scissura cordium,
 rancor, livor, et odium,
 spes, timor, ira, gaudium,
 et alia flagitia,
 tam varia,
 tamque detestabilia,
 et siqua sunt similia,
 sublime tenent solium.”

“ Within the dwellings of the great,
 Where courtly vices haunt,
 Fair virtue seldom gains a seat,
 Scared by their features gaunt.
 Here thoughtlessness with vacant mien,
 There lucre foul, and double dealing,
 And gay self-love, whose joy hath been
 Too oft the source of others' wailing.
 All these, and many more, are seen
 Within the dwellings of the great.

“ Attendant on the monarch's throne
 Stand pride and grim disdain,
 And outward laugh with inward moan;
 Envy, that joys in others' pain;
 Frenzied despair, and rancorous hate;
 And flattering treason, born to sever
 The ties of love with harsh debate;
 While fear and hope alternate ever.
 These are the various ills that wait
 Attendant on the monarch's
 throne.”

These clerical satirists sometimes laid aside the severity of their assumed character, and favoured the world with scraps of playful humour, and even condescended to compose love-ditties in their favourite Latin. Many such effusions are still preserved, and a few specimens have been printed. Among these, we may point out the “*Confessio Goliae*,” in which the poet makes an avowal of his love for dice, wine, and women; the invective of Golias against the thief who had stolen his purse; the declamation of Golias against marriage, a bitter satire on the fair sex; the dialogue “*Inter aquam et vinum*,” and the “*Disputatio inter cor et oculum*,” in which each charges the other with being the incentive to vice. We have a good specimen of the playful burlesque of this period, in an amusing song on the tailors, as old as the middle of the thirteenth century; in which they are lauded for their skill in turning old garments into new ones, when the wearers were tired with the first

fashion. This song is also curious, as an early specimen of the mixture of French with Latin, which was in this and the following centuries not uncommon, and was an approach towards the macaronic verse so popular at a later period. The few verses we have cited are accompanied, as on the last occasion, with a hasty rhyming version. The poet takes his theme from the opening lines of Ovid's "Metamorphoses:"—

"In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora; Dii, cœptis, nam vos mutastis et illas,
Aspirate meis."

"Ego dixi, dii estis;
Quæ dicenda sunt in festis
Quare prætermitterem?
Dii, revera, qui potestis
In figuram novæ vestis
Transmutare veterem.

"Pannus recens et novellus
Fit vel capa vel mantellus,
Sed secundum tempora
Primum capa, post pusillum
Transmutatur hæc in illum;
Sic mutatis corpora.

"Antiquata decollatur,
Decollata mantellatur,
Sic in modum Proteos
Demutantur vestimenta;
Nec recenter est inventa
Lex metamorphoseos.

"Cum figura sexum mutant;
Prius ruptam clam reclutant
Primates ecclesiæ;
Nec donatur, res est certa,
Nisi prius sit experta
Fortunam Tiresiæ.

"Bruma tandem revertente,
Tost unt sur la chape enté
Plerique capucium;
Alioquin dequadratur,
De quadrato retundatur,
Transit in almucium.

"That ye are gods, I make no doubt;
And wrong it is to leave you out
Of cleric office;
For who but gods, I ask, or you,
Could change old garments into new
By metamorphosis?

"When cloth is new and fresh of nap,
'Tis meet in haste ye give't the shape
Of cape or mantle;
But what the mode and form decreed,
Or why the former should precede,
You only can tell.

"As Proteus changed, ye change the
cloth;
When ruthless time and weather both
Have done their duty:
All duly clipp'd, the aged cape
Comes forth a mantle new in shape
As well as beauty.

"Erst coat, now gown, ye change at will
Not only form, but sex, your skill
In full to show to us; [plete,
And thus, to make the change com-
Tiresias it must imitate,
As well as Proteus.

"When winter comes with frost and
storm,
Some change again the faded form,
And add a cover:
With alter'd shape and alter'd use,
Shoulders and head, a warm aumuce,
It muffles over.

“ Si quid restat de morsellis
Cæsi panni sive pellis,
Non vacat officio;
Ex his fiunt manuthecæ,
Manutheca quidem Græce
Manum positio.

“ Sic ex veste vestem formant,
Engleis, Tyeis, Franceis, Nor-
mant,
Omnes generaliter;
Ut vix nullus excludatur.
Ita capa declinatur,
Sed mantellus aliter.

“ Adhuc primo recens anno,
Nova pelle, novo panno,
In arca reconditur;
Recedente tandem pilo,
Juncturarum rupto filo,
Pellis circumciditur.

“ Sic mantellus fit Apella;
Ci git li drap, e la pel là,
Post primum divortium;
A priore separata,
Cum secundo reparata,
Transit in consortium.”

“ And when each change is duly made,
If ought be left unused, 'tis said,
Be 't cloth or leather,
Quick it becomes at your commands,
A pair of gloves to guard the hands
Against the weather.

“ German or French, to custom true,
Norman or English, all pursue
The self-same fashion: [cline;
And thus, enleagued, they *cape* de-
But *mantle* has a different line
Of transformation.

“ At first to hoard it up we're fain,
While cloth and leather both remain
In fair condition;
But if the fur to fade begin,
Then from the cloth ye strip the skin
By circumcision.

“ Here lies the skin despised, and there
The cloth has proved the tailor's care
Without miscarriage;
The mantle, thus being made a Jew,
Contracts with leather fresh and new
A second marriage.”

The song goes on to describe the different transformations of the mantle, until at last, no longer capable of change, it is given as a reward to the servant.

We have many fragments still left of political satire in the French language, written both in France and in England, in this age. We have already seen, in the life of Hereward, an Anglo-Norman jongleur, immediately after the conquest, burlesquing the vanquished Saxons in the hall of the foreign invaders of their rights; there has been preserved a curious specimen of the kind of effusion which the minstrel uttered on such occasions, the more interesting, because it is written on a long slip of vellum, which the minstrel held in his hand to sing. This is a French (or Anglo-Norman) song, composed by one of the

baronial party, under Simon de Montfort, at the beginning of the civil war in the reign of Henry III. It contains satirical allusions to the leaders of the opposite party, as in the following lines, aimed at the bishop of Norwich, one of the king's chaplains, and an active partisan of the court. His house had been plundered by the popular party.

“ Et ly pastors de Norwis,
Qui devoure ses berbis,
Assez sout de ce conte;
Mout en perdi des ses biens:
Mal ert que ly lessa riens,
Ke trop en saveit de honte.”

“ And the pastor of Norwich,
Who devours his sheep,
Knows enough of this story;
He has lost much of his goods;
Bad luck to the man who left him
anything,
For his conduct has been too
disgraceful.”

In another song, written about the year 1264, when the king of France made an unsuccessful attempt to interfere between Henry and his barons, the English king and his court are the object of very coarse satire, which consists in making them talk broken and corrupt French, and use equivocal expressions. It ends by the king declaring that he will place his son Edward on the throne of France, which is highly approved by Roger Bigot:—

“ Je crai que vous verra là endret grosse fest,
Quant d'Adouart arra corroné France test.
Il l'a bien asservi, ma fil; il n'est pas best;
Il fout buen chivaler, hardouin, et honest.

“ ‘ Sir rais,’ ce dit Rogier, ‘ por Dieu, à mai entent:
Tu m'as percé la cul,* tel la pitié m'a prent,
Or doint Godelamit,† par son culmandement,
Que tu fais cestui chos bien glorieusement!’ ”

* The earl, in his broken French, uses this expression instead of *le cœur*.

† A corruption of *God-Almighty*.

“ ‘I believe that you will see there a great festival,
When France shall have crowned Edward’s head.
He has well deserved it, my son ; he is no fool ;
He is a good knight, brave, and courteous.’ ”

“ ‘Sir king,’ says Roger, ‘for God’s sake, listen to me :
Thou hast pierced my behind, so much has pity overcome me.
Now may God Almighty ordain, by his command,
That thou perform this thing very gloriously !’ ”

The wit, in this instance, cannot be preserved in a translation. Many larger works of general satire appeared during this age, but the one which has gained the most lasting reputation is the extensive poem, or cycle of poems, which goes under the title of the “History of Reynard the Fox.” It is an application of fables to a political purpose. Early in the thirteenth century, and even in the twelfth century, we trace instances in which, to burlesque the corruptions of the age, the cunning and unscrupulous Reynard is introduced acting a political character ; but, by the end of the thirteenth century, these fables had been worked up into a regular narrative, in French verse, extending to many thousand lines. The literature of the middle ages has an interest different from that of the literature of modern times. There was then less individuality of sentiment. The literature was not that of the writers, but that of the age and of the people, of which alone it represented the notions and the feelings. Hence it happens that so large a portion of it is anonymous. The great fable of “Reynard the Fox” is not a satire on particular individuals, or on particular measures, but on the age in which it was composed. It was the satire of the people ; a burlesque picture of society. The history of which we are speaking differs

much from the popular story which a later age has derived from the German. The French Reynard is much more extensive, more rambling in its incidents, and less connected as a whole. It consists of a series of episodes, each of which is a satire upon some class of persons, or on some point in the political system of the age, which was a subject of popular complaint; and it is probable that the different parts were sung, or repeated, separately, among the people, as public attention was called to them by grievances to which they were applicable. We have more than one instance of single episodes being translated into English. Thus the quarrels between Reynard the Fox and Isengrin the Wolf, formed a cutting satire on the reckless turbulence of the barons, in which sometimes low cunning, and at others brute force, gained the upper hand, and over which the sovereign (Noble, the Lion), could hold but an occasional restraint. Many of Reynard's adventures picture to us the rapacity and injustice of an age in which every man was on the watch to rob and cheat his fellow. Other parts of the story represent the disorders of the church; and others again are satires on the different classes of society. Reynard's confession, and his pilgrimage, are bitter satires on the two chief means by which the clergy exerted an abusive influence over the laity to their own advantage, and on the hypocrisy which prevailed among the professors of religion.

6.) Literature, as a political weapon, had, while restricted to the Latin language, been only in the power of the clergy. It was a great step which placed it, through the French language, within reach of the higher classes of the laity in England, and of society in general in France; but in our country

another step was made in the thirteenth century, which marks the appearance on the political arena of a new class of combatants—the Commons of England. The first political songs and satires in the English language were published during the barons' wars, in the reign of Henry III. The earliest known example is a very spirited satirical song on the victory gained by the popular party over the royalists at Lewes, in 1264. Such compositions in English make their appearance not unfrequently amid the events of the latter part of this century; in the fourteenth century they take the place of the French poems of the preceding age. The English spirit and blood had, in fact, overcome that which, by the Norman conquest, had been intruded upon it. A satirical poem, written in English in the reign of Edward II, lays open the vices of all orders of society. Truth, it tells us, had been long banished from Rome. I modernise the language:—

“For at the court of Rome, where truth should begin,
He is forbidden the palace, and dare not come therein.”

The pope's clerks and the cardinals had threatened to slay truth, if he came there:—

“All the pope's clerks have taken them to rede (*counsel*),
If truth come among them, that he shall be dead.
There dare he not show himself, for fear to be slain,
Among none of the cardinals dare he be seen.”

Money was the only argument or plea to which the pope listened. Of archbishops and bishops, “Some are fools themselves, and lead a sorry life;” they and the archdeacons were equally venal. Of the latter we are told:—

“ And these archdeacons that are sent to visit holy kirk,
 Every one tries how he may most cursedly work ;
 He will take bribes of the one and of the other,
 And let the parson have a wife,* and the priest another.”

The parson and the priest are censured for their evil life, and their ignorance :—

“ For right methinketh it fareth by a priest that is ‘ lewed’
(ignorant),
 As by a jay in a cage, that himself hath ‘ bishrewed’ (*cursed*) ;
 Good English he speketh, but he knows never what ;
 No more knows a ‘ lewed’ prest in book what he ‘ rat’
(reads)

by day.

Then is a ‘ lewed’ priest no better than a jay.”

The pretended charity of the monasteries was of the same stamp as the religion of the priest :—

“ For if there come to an abbey two poor men or three,
 And ask help of them for holy charity,
 Scarcely will one ever listen to them, either young or old,
 But let them cower there all day in hunger and in cold,
 and starve.

Look what love there is to God, whom they say that they serve ! ”

We might make a long list of short desultory satires in English on the Romish Church and its professors, published during the fourteenth century. In one ballad, the preaching friars are taxed with pride, and with the undignified manner in which they represented sacred subjects :—

“ Of these friars’ minors, methinks great wonder,
 That are grown so haughty, who sometime were under ;
 Among men of holy church they make much ‘ blunder’ (*confusion*) ;
 May He that looks from above scatter them āsunder ! ”

* The word *wife* meant simply *woman* at this period.

In another, they are openly proclaimed to be the ministers of sin :—

“Friars, friars, woe be to ye ! *ministri malorum*,
For many a man’s soul bring ye *ad pœnas infernorum*.
When fiends fell first from heaven, *quo prius habitabant*,
On earth they left the sins seven, *et fratres communicabant*.”

They are here described as vicious in the extreme—guests to be carefully avoided in an honest man’s house :—

“Let a friar of some order *tecum pernoctare*,
Either thy wife or thy daughter *hic vult violare*,
Or thy son he will prefer, *sicut fortem fortis* ;
God give such a friar pain *in inferni portis* !”

There is preserved a very singular English burlesque on the unprofitable sermons of these preaching friars, which is worthy of Rabelais himself. I venture to give a few sentences from the beginning, as a specimen, modernising the language, to make it more generally intelligible. It forms a link in the history of the mediæval satires against the clergy—satires which deserve well to be collected together in a more complete series, for they form what may be well characterized as *the voice of the middle ages against the Church of Rome*.

“*Mollificant olera durissima crusta*. Friends, this is to say to your lewd understanding, that hot plants and hard crusts maken soft hard plants. The help and the grace of the gray goose that goes on the green, and the wisdom of the water windmill, with the good grace of a gallon pitcher, and all the salt sausages that be sodden in Norfolk upon Saturday, be with us now at our beginning, and help us in our

ending, and quit you of bliss and both your eyes, that never shall have ending. Amen.

“ My dear cursed creatures, there was once a wife whose name was Catherine Fyste, and she was crafty in court, and well could carve. Thrice she sent after the four synods of Rome, to know why, wherefore, and for what cause, that Alleluja was closed before the cup came once round. Why believest thou not for sooth that there stood once a cock on St. Paul’s steeple top, and drew up the strapples of his breech? How provest thou that? By all the four doctors of Wynberry-hills, that is to say, Vertas, Gadatryme, Trumpas, and Dadyltrymsert, the which four doctors say there was once an old wife had a cock to her son, and he looked out of an old dove-cott, and warned and charged that no man should be so hardy neither to ride nor go on St. Paul’s steeple top, unless he rode on a three-footed stool, or else that he brought with him a warrant of his neck,” &c. &c.

The fourteenth century, like the thirteenth, had its grand satirical poem; this was the “ Visions of Piers Ploughman,” a work strongly marked with the bold, masculine energy of the English character. This poem was, perhaps, the most popular satire of the middle ages; to us it is rendered somewhat confused by its allegorical form; but that was consonant with the taste of the age in which it was written. We are astonished at the boldness with which it attacks the abuses of the secular and ecclesiastical powers, and with which it urges the doctrine of the natural equality of mankind. In “ Reynard the Fox,” the satire was indirectly implied, and was only felt by an application which was not necessarily apparent; in “ Piers Ploughman ” it is direct and personal.

There is a daring spirit of radicalism in this work, which shows the freedom of opinion which had been generated by the long intellectual agitation of the preceding century, and which had given the most profound alarm to the Church of Rome. "Reason" is the preacher whom the writer of "Piers Ploughman" brings forward to reform mankind. He proclaims that the monks and friars would be better employed in occupations more useful to society than the vacant life they lead. Truth is the saint whose shrine he recommends as the object of pilgrimage. This saint, however, proves to be unknown to the Romish clergy—even the palmer, who wandered furthest in search of strange saints, had never heard of such a one before:—

"This folk frayned hym first,
Fro whennes he come.

'Fram Synay,' he seide,
'And fram oure Lordes sepulcre;
In Bethlem and in Babiloyne,
I have ben in bothe;
In Armonye and Alisaundre,
In manye othere places.
Ye may se by my signes
That sitten on myn hatte,
That I have walked ful wide
In weet and in drye,
And sought goode seintes
For my soules helthe.'

"Knowestow aught a corsaint
That men calle Truthe? [wey,
Koudestow aught wissen us the
Wher that wye dwelleth?'

'Nay, so me God helpe!'

Seide the gome thanne,
'I seig nevere palmere,
With pyk ne with scrippe,
Asken after hym er
Til now in this place.'"

"This people asked him first,
From whence he came.

'From Sinai,' he said,
'And from our Lord's sepulchre;
In Bethlehem and in Babylon,
I have been in both;
In Armenia and Alexandria,
In many other places.

You may see by my signs
That sit on my hat,
That I have walked full wide
In wet and in dry,
And sought good saints
For the health of my soul.'

'Dost thou know at all a chief
Whom they call Truth? [saint
Canst thou at all teach us the way,
Where that personage dwells?'

'Nay, as I hope for God's help!'

Said the man then,
'I never saw a palmer,
With staff or with scrip,
Ask after him before,
Till now in this place.'"

The abusive pardons and indulgences of the pope, the unprofitable debates of the theologians, the sen-

sual life of the monks and friars, all come in for their share of the reformer's lash. These latter are described as proud and overbearing, whose only study was to cheat the rich out of their lands, who cared nothing for true religion, and who looked with contempt upon the poor. These sentiments are expressed still more strongly in another, and a shorter, satirical poem, written about the end of the fourteenth century, and published under the title of "Piers Ploughman's Creed." At the time when this poem was written, the reformers had become a sect, known by the name of Lollards, and they had already been made objects of persecution by the church, the secular power of which was at this moment strengthened by political events. With the final suppression of the Lollards, the intellectual struggle was closed for a time. Learning, in the universities, had been crushed by the influence of the monks, who had raised over it the faculty of theology. The fifteenth century is, indeed, a dark period in literary as well as in political history. The Romish Church sat heavily, a mighty incubus on the human mind.

We may pass over the history of the other branches of comic literature in England during the fourteenth century more briefly, for they are in general but imitations in English of the French compositions of the previous age. We have a few burlesques on manners and customs, such as the "Tournament of Tottenham," and the "Feast," and some pieces given in the "*Reliquiæ Antiquæ*;" and various compositions of a playful character. Here and there we meet with amusing specimens of local and personal satire. Of this we have a curious example, written as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century, in a Latin

rhyming satire on the people of Norfolk, to whom are applied many of the stories which at a much later period were told of the men of Gotham. In the second volume of the “*Reliquiæ Antiquæ*” will be found a very curious satire of the fourteenth century, in Latin prose, against the people of Rochester, who are accused, among other things, of having tails. In the first volume of the same collection we have a burlesque Latin ballad, composed at the beginning of the fourteenth century, giving an account of a monkish feast at Gloucester. It is written in a style in which grammar and composition are set at defiance, and was evidently intended not only as a burlesque on the grossness of monastic life, but on the ignorance of the monks themselves, and on the barbarousness of monkish Latin. The abbot and prior, with their friends, are described as sitting at the head of the table, and keeping all the good things to themselves, while the monks of lower degree have to do all the drudgery, and are deprived of their share of the drinking. The party leave the feast to perform the evening service, and then return to the table, and “drink till they cry ;”—

“Post completum rediere,
Et currinum (*the cup*) combibere,
Potaverunt usque flere
propter potus plurima.”

When the abbot proposed that the others should be admitted to drink, the prior said: “They have enough wine; shall we give all our wine to the poor? What care we for the poor? What they have is not much, but it is enough for them. They come to our meals without invitation; if they were well fed, they would become proud and presumptuous :”—

"Prior dixit ad abbatis,
 Ipsi habent vinum satis,
 Vultis dare paupertatis
 noster potus omnia?
 Quid nos spectat paupertatis?
 Habet parum, habet satis,
 Postquam venit non vocatis
 ad noster convivia.
 Si nutritum esset bene,
 Nec ad cibus nec ad cœne
 Venisset pro marcis denæ,
 nisi per precaria."

In the sequel, the debauch is carried to the last degree of drunkenness. The actors in it are reported to the bishop, but they escape with impunity; and the inferiors who complained against them, in revenge for being excluded, are brought to account for their rebellious conduct. In the fifteenth century we have a few burlesque pieces among the writings of Lydgate, and other poets of his school, but they are in general tame and pointless. The cleverest piece of comic writing of this period that we have met with, is preserved in a manuscript in the British Museum. It is a life of St. Nemo (or St. Nobody), and is a parody on the Romish "Lives of Saints." Though a tract of considerable length, passages of Scripture are adroitly applied to this imaginary saint, which prove beyond a doubt his power and station to be superior to all the other saints of the calendar. Some notion of the style of this tract may be derived from the opening lines, which are given below in a note.*

* Beatus igitur Nemo iste contemporaneus Dei patris, et in essentia præcipue consimilis filio, nec creatus nec præcedens, sed formatus, in sacra pagina reperitur, in qua plane dictum est per psalmistam dicentem, Dies formabantur, et Nemo in eis. Cui postea merito tanta crevit auctoritas, ut ac si terrena res-

The fabliaux of the thirteenth century, with all their spirit and satire, and much of their objectionable characteristics, took an English form in the hands of Chaucer; but on the continent they were undergoing a new transformation. The same fearful pestilence which had furnished the occasion for composing the "Visions of Piers Ploughman," gave birth to the "Decameron" of Boccaccio. In distant England, this general calamity was looked upon as a signal for repentance, for self-accusation and reform; while in Italy, in the very centre of the ecclesiastical power, it was only an occasion for heartless mirth and licentious raillery. The "Decameron" is a mere collection of fabliaux turned into Italian prose; but it gave the example to a long series of imitators, and the jongleurs and their compositions were soon forgotten in the popularity of these new story-tellers. In France, the earliest and best collection is the celebrated work known as the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," composed soon after the middle of the fifteenth century. The story-tellers were followed by the jesters, who also appear to have originated in Italy, the first collection which has obtained any lasting fame being that of Poggio of Florence. This class of writers were gradually aiming at the Romish Church a blow no less fatal than that inflicted by the direct satire of the reformers; but they, amid the general licentiousness of the time, were allowed to work almost unobserved. With these sprang up a reckless jeering atheism, which prevailed extensively under cover of the

puens ad cœlorum culmina volatu mirabili pervolavit, sicut legitur, Nemo ascendit in cœlum. Et hoc idem testatur Dominus, dicens, Nemo potest venire ad me, &c.—MS. Reg. 12 D. III. fol. 158, ro.

Romish rites and outward ceremonial of the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. But the church at this time could overlook atheism and immorality, while it hunted and destroyed where it could the slightest traces of what it chose to term heresy. The freedom with which Boccaccio brought monks and nuns on the stage in his licentious stories, rendered the "Decameron" unpalatable to the clergy. But another collection of stories, many of which are no less objectionable than those of Boccaccio, the "Ecatommithi" of Giraldi Cinthio, composed two centuries later, in the very heat of the Reformation, was authorized to be printed by the *vice-inquisitor hæreticæ pravitatis*, named Cigliari, who states that these tales are consonant with the principles of the holy Roman Church, and contain nothing opposed to the apostolical faith—*Hecatommithos consonos esse sanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ, et ab apostolica fide non abhor-rere*. In fact, Cinthio states in his introduction that he had designedly avoided introducing monks and nuns in objectionable situations. We may, however, easily excuse the Romish Church from being very nice on this point at the period of which we are now speaking, for the treatise by the Jesuit Sanchez, "De Sancto Matrimonii Sacramento," which was famous even at the time it was published for the extreme licentiousness of much of its details, was authorized for impression as containing *nil bonis moribus adversum*, and the censor naïvely informs us that he had read it over and over with *the greatest pleasure—legi et perlegi maxima cum voluptate!*

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, after the invention of printing, the popular literature of the middle ages began to make its appearance in a debased

form, a circumstance which marks the last gasp of the mediæval system. The great romances of the thirteenth century were published in a shape which gradually degenerated into what have been since termed chap-books, a literature that was hawked about the streets. Many of the fabliaux and comic poems were issued as broadside ballads. "Reynard the Fox," derived from the German and Dutch, came forth as a mere fable. It was accompanied by other comic romances, such as that of Howleglas (*Eulenspiegel*), still teeming with satire on society and on the church. These were followed in France by a very extensive variety of low burlesque and satirical publications, which were circulated among the middle and lower classes, and their cynical indecency shows how the writers pandered to the scandalous dissoluteness of society in the sixteenth century. In England, John Skelton may be looked upon as the last of the mediæval satirists. In his writings there is more of the character of the middle ages than of the *renaissance*; Gothic imagery, the sentiments almost of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, mixed with the pedantry of the sixteenth. In his writings and in those of the school he formed, we find the elements of the macaronic poetry which became early in the sixteenth century so popular in Italy in the writings of Merlinus Coccaius (*Folengi*), and in France in those of Antonius de Arena (*de la Sable*).

In many of its characteristics the sixteenth century bore a remarkable resemblance to the thirteenth. It opened in the same manner with religious and political agitation, with a new and, in the sequel, a more successful struggle for emancipation from the tyranny of

the middle ages. It was a powerful stream, which, confined for a time within narrow rocks, suddenly burst from its hiding-place, an irresistible torrent. The Reformation was no child of accident or circumstances, but the inevitable result of the efforts of centuries. The voice of the middle ages against the Church of Rome had been silent during the fifteenth century, but it was not stifled; and when, at the Reformation, it was heard again, we recognize in it the same bold, fearless, manly tone which gave life to the literature of the thirteenth century. In fact, the Church of Rome had not changed in its measures or in its character: it had the same political and moral vices—pride, tyranny, and cruelty, avarice and lust—which seemed to increase with the imbecility of age, and they called forth the same expressions of indignation from the satirists. It is somewhat singular that the satirical writers of the beginning of the sixteenth century raised up a personage similar in every respect to the Goliath of the beginning of the thirteenth; they named him *Pasquillus*, or *Pasquil*. Like Goliath, this personage claimed an unbounded licence in expressing his opinions, and the “*tomi duo Pasquillorum*” form a series of the bitterest satires on the Romish corruptions that can easily be imagined. These satires partake largely of the coarseness of the age. Pasquil appears sometimes as an old man, worn out with indulgence, who vents his satire on the society with whose vices he has had a long acquaintance; at others he appears as a young and vigorous champion in the cause of truth. These effusions, composed sometimes in Latin, and sometimes in Italian (for Italy seems to have been their “fatherland”), both in verse and in prose, are at times addressed to Pas-

quil in the form of epistles or epigrams, as in the following instance:—

“*Ad Pasquillum.*

Cur non te fingi scurram, Pasquille, rogasti?
Cum Romæ scurris omnia jam liceant.”

Or in this, where Rome herself dictates the offerings by which her favour is to be bought:—

“*Roma ad Pasquillum.*

Si pueros mihi prostitutes, tenerasque puellas,
(Hæc mihi namque placent munera) dives eris.”

More frequently the sentiment is made to come from Pasquil's own mouth, as in the following epigram, in which he bids farewell to Rome:—

“Roma, vale: vidi, satis est vidisse: revertar
Quum leno, meretrix, scurra, cinædus ero.”

It was the literature represented by these compositions which paved the way for the Reformation. Even the tales of the middle ages became a formidable weapon in the hands of such men as Henry Stephens, whose “*Apologie pour Herodote*” is a singularly bitter attack on the Roman Catholic party.

Among the most remarkable and amusing burlesques published at the eve of the Reformation, was the famous collection of the “*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*,” which originated in one of the religious disputes that gave warning of coming events. A converted Jew in Germany, named Pfeffercorn, in his eager and mistaken zeal, had obtained a decree for the destruction of the Talmud and other Hebrew writings; but a scholar of more liberal views, well known by the name of Reuchlin, opposed its execution. The popish clergy took part with the Jew—

it is probable that they had backed him from the beginning—and Reuchlin was made the object of persecution. At this moment the accomplished Ulric von Hutten came to Reuchlin's aid, and composed in burlesque Latin a series of letters, in which he ridicules, with overpowering wit, the ignorance and immoral life of the Romish clergy of that age. In the hands of the monks scholastic learning had been reduced to a very low pitch, and was almost entirely confined to a barbarous system of theology. The limits of their polite literature were very narrow; for, dignified with the title of grammar or poetry, its only object was supposed to be the learning to compose doggerel Latin verses, or no less barbarous prose. The now reviving study of the classic authors was looked upon with great jealousy by the clergy, and it is this feeling which generally furnishes materials for Ulric von Hutten's satire. The classical writers, and the new scholars who read them, were *secular poets*, and were looked upon as the inveterate enemies of the theologians. "Write to me," says one of the correspondents in this laughable collection, "whether it be necessary for eternal salvation that scholars learn grammar from the secular poets, such as Virgil, Tullius, Pliny, and others; it seems to me that this is not a good method of studying." Another thus communicates his thoughts and fears on the subject:—

"As I have often written to you, I am grieved that this ribaldry (*ista ribaldria*), namely, the faculty of poetry, becomes common, and is spread through all provinces and regions. In my time there was only one poet, who was called Samuel; and now, in this city alone, there are at least twenty, and they

vex us all who hold with the ancients. Lately I thoroughly defeated one, who said that *scholaris* does not signify a person who goes to the schools for the purpose of learning; and I said, Ass, will you correct the holy doctor who expounded this word? &c. . . . It is said here that all the poets will side with doctor Reuchlin against the theologians. I wish all the poets were there where pepper grows, that they might let us go in peace; for it is to be feared that the faculty of arts will perish on account of these poets, for they go about saying that the artists [that is, those who study in that faculty] seduce youth, and take money from them, and will make them bachelors and masters, although they know nothing."

Another gives the following narrative of the troubles he has drawn on himself in defence of "the cause :"—

"There is here a certain poet, who is called George Cibus, and he is one of the secular poets, and lectures publicly in poetry, and is in other respects a good fellow. But, as you know, these poets, when they are not theologians like you, are always finding fault with others, and have no respect for the theologians. And once, in a party in his house, when we were drinking strong beer, and sat till three o'clock, and I was moderately drunk, for that beer rose up into my head, then there was one there who was not a very good friend of mine, and I offered him a cup, and he took it. But afterwards he would not return the compliment, and thrice I warned him, and he would not answer me, but sat silent, and said nothing. Then I said to myself: Lo, he despises thee, and is proud, and will always confound thee. And I was stirred in my anger, and took a cup, and threw it at

his head. Then that poet was angry at me, and said that I had made a disturbance in his house, and said I should go out of his house in the devil's name. Then I answered: What do I care if you are my enemy? I have got as bad enemies as you, and yet I have stood before them. What if you are a poet? I have friends also who are poets, and they are quite as good as you, *ego bene merdarem in vestram poetriam*. Do you think I am a fool, or that I was born on a tree like an apple? Then he called me a donkey, and said that I never saw a poet. Then I answered him, and spoke of you and others. Therefore I pray you very earnestly, that you will only write me one ditty, which I will show to this poet and others, and I will boast that you are my friend, and that you are a much better poet than he is."

Another describes his triumphs over the "seculars:"—

"Venerable sir, you must know that I have settled at the university of Heidelberg, and that I study in theology; but with this I hear a daily lecture in poetry, in which I have begun to profit notably with the grace of God, and now I know by heart all the fables of Ovid in the 'Metamorphoses,' and I know how to explain them quadruply, that is, naturally, literally, historically, and spiritually, which those secular poets do not know. And lately I asked one of them the derivation of the name *Mavors*? Then he told me an opinion which was not true; but I corrected him, and said that he is called *Mavors, quasi mares vorans*, and he was confounded. Then I said, What is meant by the nine muses allegorically? and he did not know: and I said that the nine muses signify the seven choirs of angels, &c. . . . So that

you see these poets now only study in their art literally, and they do not understand allegories and spiritual expositions, because they are carnal men."

The wit of these satires is much heightened by the burlesque Latin of the original. They are all supposed to be written by bigoted Romish partisans, and are addressed to Ortuinus Gratus, a stanch defender of the party of Pfeffercorn. The notions of the orthodox "poets" relating to Homer, as given in the following letter from a correspondent named Peter, are very amusing:—

"Most excellent sir, inasmuch as you are naturally inclined to me, and show much favour to me, I also will do my possible for you. Now, you said to me, Peter, when you come to Rome, see if there are any new books, and send me some. Here you have a new book, which is printed in this place. And, because you are a poet, I believe that you can improve yourself much by it. For I have heard here, in an audience from a notary, who ought to be perfect in that art, that this book is the fountain of poetry, and that its author, who is called Homer, is the father of all poets; and he said that there is still another Homer in Greek. Then I said, What is Greek to me? that Latin one is better; for I want to send it to Germany to master Ortuinus, who does not care for those Greek fancies. And I inquired of him what was contained in the book. He replied, that it treats of certain men who are called Greeks, who made war upon other men who are called Trojans. I think I have heard their name before. And these Trojans had a great city, and those Greeks placed themselves before the city, and lay there full ten years. Then the Trojans sometimes went out to

them, and they fought in earnest with them, and they killed one another wonderfully, so that the whole field was bloody; and there was a certain water which was coloured with blood, and was all red, so that it flowed as though it were blood. And a noise was heard in the sky, and one threw a stone which twelve men could not lift, and a horse began to speak, and prophesied. But I do not believe such things, for they seem to me impossible; yet I know not if it be a book of much authority. Pray write to me about it, and tell me what you think of it."

Another correspondent gives a description of what he saw on his way to Rome:—

"Next we came to Mantua, and my companion said, 'Here Virgil was born.' And I answered, What care I for that pagan? We will go to the Carmelites, and see Baptista Mantuanus,* who is twice as good as Virgil, as I have heard Ortuinus say more than ten times. And I told him how you once blamed Donatus, when he says that Virgil was the best of poets; and you said, If Donatus were here, I would tell him to his face that he lied, for Baptista Mantuanus is above Virgil. And when we came to the monastery of the Carmelites, they told us that Baptista Mantuanus is dead, and then I said, May he rest in peace! Afterwards we came to some small towns, and one is called Monte Flascon, and there we drank the best wine I ever tasted in my life, and I asked the host what it was called, and he said, It is *Lacrima Christi*. And I said to my companion, I wish Christ would cry in our country. And so we had a good drinking, and after two days we entered Rome."

* A well-known Latin poet of this age.

The satire on the doctrine and manners of the clergy is equally amusing. The following is a most edifying discussion of a case of conscience, which is referred to the decision of master Ortuinus:—

“ You told me to write to you, and ask your opinion on theological questions, which you can solve better than the courtiers at Rome. Now, therefore, I ask your mastership what you think of any one who on Friday, or any other fast-day, eats an egg with a chicken in it? For the other day, in the Campo-fiore, we sat in an inn, and made a collation, and were eating eggs, and I, opening an egg, saw that there was a young chicken in it, and showed it to my companion. And he said, ‘ Eat it quickly before the waiter comes, for if he sees it you will have to pay for it as though it were a fowl; for it is the custom here that when the waiter puts anything on the table, you must pay for it whether you eat it or not, for he will not take it back; and if he see that there is a young fowl in the egg, he will say, You must pay me for the fowl, for we charge a small one the same as a large one.’ And immediately I swallowed the egg with the chicken in it; and afterwards I recollected that it was Friday, and I said to my companion, You have caused me to commit a mortal sin, in eating flesh on a Friday. And he said that it was not a mortal sin, nor even a venial sin, for the chicken is not reckoned as anything but an egg until it is born; and he told me that it is as with cheeses, in which there are sometimes grubs, and in cherries, and in fresh peas and beans, which are all eaten on Fridays, and even on the vigils of the Apostles. But the waiters are such rascals that they say they are flesh, that they may have more money.

Then I went away, and thought about it. But, master Ortuinus, I am much troubled about it, and know not how I ought to proceed. It seems to me that these young fowls in the eggs are flesh, because the matter is formed and figured into the members and body of an animal, and has life. It is different with grubs in cheeses and fruit, for worms are reckoned as fishes, as I have heard from a medical man, who is a very good naturalist. Therefore, I pray you very earnestly for your opinion, that, if you judge it a mortal sin, I may get absolution before I return to Germany."

A zealous Romanist complains of the irreverent manners of the people of Mentz, and adds:—

"Here is one who said that he does not believe that the tunic of our Lord at Treves is the tunic of our Lord, but that it is an old lousy garment; and, moreover, he does not believe that the hair of the blessed Virgin is still in the world. And another said that it is possible that the three kings in Cologne are three rustics from Westphalia; and that the sword and shield of St. Michael never belonged to St. Michael. And he also said, *quod vellet merdare super indulgentias fratrum prædicatorum*, because the said friars are buffoons, and deceive women and rustics. Then I said, To the fire, to the fire with this heretic! And he laughed at me," &c. &c.

The details of clerical licentiousness, given by the supposed writers of these letters, cannot, consistently with propriety, be transferred to our pages. One master Conrad writes to master Ortuinus Gratus, in terms which we take the liberty of softening down: "You wrote to me lately that you had renounced absolutely the love of women, except only one or

two in a month. I am astonished at this. Did you not often tell us that there are greater faults than loving? Samson and Solomon loved very much, and we are neither stronger than Samson, nor wiser than Solomon. Love is charity," &c. Such are the famous "*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*," with which I will close my sketch of the history of satire before the Reformation. The productions of the mediæval comic writers and satirists are not undeserving of our attention. They paint to us, more accurately than any other documents, the manners and feelings of distant ages. Regarding them simply as literary compositions, it is necessary to be acquainted with them to understand and appreciate fully the writings of Rabelais and the other satirists of the Reformation, who are ranged among the classical writers of the sixteenth century. As a part of political and intellectual history, the satirical literature of the ages we have been reviewing is of the greatest importance, and it ought to be brought before the world. There is a spirit of forgetfulness abroad in the present age; a large portion of the world seems no longer to recollect that any one ever discovered errors in the Church of Rome, and there are writers who paint the middle ages as the very golden age of the human race. They were dark ages in all the essentials which constitute moral and political darkness.



XXIV.

ON THE SATIRICAL LITERATURE OF
THE REFORMATION.

HEN the art of printing was first made known, it was looked upon only as an easy method of multiplying copies of manuscripts, and excited the fear of the ignorant, who fancied that it was akin to sorcery and magic, and the jealousy of a rather numerous class of persons who saw that it would deprive them of their occupation; but none probably were aware of the might of the new engine which had been thus brought into existence, or were capable of foreseeing that “the liberty of the press” would one day be a watchword in sanguinary wars and mighty revolutions. Until the beginning of the sixteenth century, the press was in its infancy, a harmless child, which had not yet learnt to exercise or feel its strength. It arrived at a vigorous maturity at the moment when old systems and old creeds, which had moved on thoughtlessly through centuries, were tottering on the brink of destruction. At this time kings ventured to take into their grasp the dangerous weapon—an English Henry took up the controversial cudgels against a Luther—but they were scared and astounded at

finding that on this new field of combat the proud wielders of the sceptres of nations were humbled before the single strength even of a simple preacher, and they strove to chase away the terrible apparition with the weapons which in their hands had been more effectual—the axe, and the rope, and the faggot. As early as the time of Francis I, when the writings of the followers of Luther and Calvin were widely circulated in France, royal proclamations against libels and seditious writings began to make their appearance, which were frequently repeated during the following reigns, the punishment of offenders being generally hanging or burning.*

A multitude of causes combined to favour the spread of the Reformation when it broke out at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Among these we must reckon the extreme licentiousness of the age. The Church of Rome could overlook immorality; it was brazen-faced enough to be amused at the satire which was levelled at its own vices; it was willing to smile even at the flippant ribaldry of irreligion; although it would not pardon any attempt at reform. Before the actual outburst of the Reformation, the press, in Italy and elsewhere, had sent forth many books of satire and mockery, which contained the hostile spirit of the Reformers without their religious feeling, but which powerfully shook people's faith in the then existing institutions, especially among men of letters. This spirit was promoted in no small degree by the revival of the study of

* We may refer our readers, on the political state of the press in these ages in France, to an interesting pamphlet by M. Leber, "*De l'état réel de la Presse et des Pamphlets depuis François 1er jusqu'à Louis XIV.*" 8vo. Paris, 1834.

classical literature, which not only enlarged men's views and created a love of independent and philosophical inquiry in theological matters, but, as Lucian and other writers of that stamp became favourites, furnished precedents and models which were not thrown away. We find, accordingly, that most of the great scholars of the earlier half of the sixteenth century, were either favourers of the new opinions, or at least opponents of persecution, a circumstance which, at a time when some of the most powerful princes of the age were ambitious of surrounding themselves with learned men, had no little influence in protecting the Reformation at its first beginnings.

We must observe, also, that the spirit of satire, so natural to mankind, and at all times a weapon against which no armour is entirely proof, found a multitude of weak points in the practice and character of the Romish system, which for ages had been giving way before its repeated attacks. The discordance between the lives and doctrines of the priesthood was an unfailing source of ridicule. The extravagant pretensions of the Church—its inherent vices—many of its favourite doctrines, were equally absurd and profane. No doctrine that has ever been broached in the world could lead to greater and more supremely ridiculous absurdities than that of transubstantiation, even as treated in the monkish writers, who are full of stories which are too satirically disgusting to repeat at the present day ; what, therefore, must they be in the hands of the witty scoffer ! They became matters of scornful jest between the reformer and the catholic, even in the daily intercourse of life. We may quote an example which is said to have occurred in a town

in France at the time of the earlier religious troubles in that country. It was the custom among the zealous Catholics, when the consecrated host was carried to or from church in procession, to bare their heads, fall on their knees, and worship it as it passed. One day two such processions issued at the same moment from churches on the opposite sides of the street, as a man of some weight by his station and learning, hated by the Catholics as an obstinate and able leader of the Huguenots, came by. The fearless Reformer kept his upright position, with his hat on his head. The leader of one of the processions, a violent and persecuting priest, approached him fiercely and said, "Impious man, why dost thou not fall down and worship thy Creator, the God whom we carry?" The Huguenot looked for a moment at the priest and at the two processions, and then deliberately inquired, "Which of the two?" The priest was utterly confounded by this unexpected question, rejoined his procession without replying, and continued his way.* The ignorance and vulgarity of a large portion of the popish clergy, and the slovenly and inefficient manner in which they often performed their duties, furnished a constant subject of ridicule. Probably not less than a third of the popular jokes of the sixteenth century, turned on the character of the clergy;

* Most of the stories, whether Monkish or Reformist, will hardly bear translating. We may venture to give one example of the former in illustration: "Rustica anserem in quoddam oppidum vendendum sub brachio portans, primum est templum ingressa, atque cum ibi tunc sacra fierent, accessit et ipsa cum ansere ad altare, perceptura a sacerdote hostiam, quam anser illi incaute præripuit atque devoravit, quod illa flendo sacerdoti conqueritur. Cui sacerdos, Noli, inquit, flere, *dabo tibi alium Deum.*"

such, for instance, as those of the illiterate priest who, finding *salta per tria* (*i. e.* skip over three leaves) written at the bottom of a page in his mass-book, deliberately jumped down three of the steps before the altar, to the no small astonishment of the congregation; of another who, finding the title of the day's service indicated only by the abbreviation, *Re*, read the mass of the *Requiem*, instead of the service of the *Resurrection*; of one who, being so illiterate as to be unable to pronounce readily the long words in his ritual, always omitted them, and pronounced the word *Jesus*, which he said was much more devotional; and a host of other stories of a similar character. Even the service of the catholic church was not unfrequently turned to ridicule in popular songs, of which but a few specimens now remain. One of the most curious of these is a ballad against the mass, written in France, in 1562, and directed to be sung to the popular tune of "*Hari, hari, l'ame.*"* After giving a burlesque description of the introductory ceremonies, and telling how the priest sat for the *introit* and the Epistle, the song informs us that he then reads a legend in Latin, "for fear it should be understood:"—

" Puis une legende
En prose, en Latin,
De peur qu'on n'entende
Tout son patelin
Du saint qu'il lui plaist."

He then takes a bit of the Gospel, and shows his skill in cutting and mutilating it:—

* These songs are printed in Le Roux de Lincy's "*Recueil de Chants Historiques.*"

“ Du saint Evangile
 Il prend quelque endroit,
 Qu’il coupe et mutile.
 Comme il est adroit
 De faire tel faict ! ”

After sneering in the same manner at the worship of saints, &c. the song goes on to state that the priest causes his followers next to worship a piece of bread, which “ he breaks and devours : ” —

“ Un morceau de paste
 Il fait adorer,
 Le rompt de sa patte
 Pour le devorer,
 Le gourmand qu’il est ! ”

The god of the priest is described as undergoing still greater indignities : —

“ Le dieu qu’il fait faire,
 La bouche le prend,
 Le cœur le digère,
 Le venture le rend
 Au fons du retrait. ”

And in the same style this bold song, composed in the midst of violent persecutions, is continued to the end. Twenty years before the date of this composition, a song written in 1542, against the abuses of priests, monks, and shaven (“ des abus des prestres, moines, et rasez ”), begins with the following vigorous declamation against the Church of Rome : —

“ O gras tondus,
 Mal avez esté secourus :
 Long-temps y a.
 Vos grans abus
 On le verra. ”

Vostre autel est ruiné,
 Vostre regne est bien miné,
 Il tombera.
 Papistes, pharisiens,
 Vostre Antechrist et les siens
 Trebuchera."

The Gospel, which the papists had so long banished, was now returned; and would drive away all their evil devices, and their bread-god would become mouldy by disuse:—

"L'Evangile que haissez,
 Quand aurez fait plus qu'assez,
 Demourera.
 Vous l'avez long-temps banny,
 Mais puisqu'il est reveny,
 Vostre joly pain benict
 Se moysira."

The satirising and reforming spirit of the age appeared not unfrequently on the stage—in the rude performances which then made pretensions to the title of the drama. The theatre in Italy, much more perfect at this period than in the other countries of Western or Southern Europe, but cynically licentious in its representations, had been for years in the habit of exhibiting to public ridicule, with impunity, the worst vices of society, and of attacking indiscriminately the weaknesses of Church and State, and had probably set the example, in this respect, to other countries. A singularly bold satirical play, or morality (as such compositions were then called), attacking most unsparingly the vices of the Romish Church and of its ministers, and impressing on men's minds the necessity and expedience of a speedy reformation, was written in Scotland as early as the year 1536, by Sir David Lindsay, under the title of "The Parlia-

ment of Correction, or a pleasant satire of the three Estates," and is known to have been exhibited there in the beginning of the year 1540. Dramatic pieces of the same description were composed in England, a little later, by John Bale, and others. Every reader of D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," is acquainted with an analysis that writer has given of a satirical play on the avarice of the Romish priesthood, performed in Berne, in Switzerland, in 1526. Moralities like those above mentioned, and falling not far short of them in the boldness with which they censured the then existing state of things, were common in France in the earlier part of the same century, and their licentious raillery was shielded under the joyous personages of mother "Folie," grandmother "Sottise," and the like, whence such compositions became more generally known under the title of "Sottises."* Such a "Sottise" was performed at Geneva on the first Sunday in Lent, 1523, which there can be no doubt bore allusion to the dawning reformation. Mother Folie is introduced lamenting the loss of her husband, Bontemps (*Good Times*), when suddenly the post from Geneva brings her news of him. He is not dead, but he writes that he is dwelling at a couple of leagues' distance from Paradise, that he is in good health, and that he will return when justice shall have its free course, and there will be no danger of being hanged unjustly. Mother Folie calls together her friends, and reads them her husband's letter, and they are filled with joy. The piece ends by their all sitting down to drink, in order to pass the time till Bontemps's return.

* See the Essay on the History of the Drama in the present volume.

Hard truths were told under the cover of mere mirth ; and, accordingly, when a second part of the Sottise was performed at the same place on the second Sunday in Lent, 1524, the duke and duchess of Savoy, who happened to be there, and were to have been present at the representation, kept away, because they had been informed that the actors were heretics. In this second piece, Mother Folie is represented as being dead, and Grandmother Sottise recommends each of her children to learn a trade or profession, and she conducts them to the World (*au Monde*). The World examines them all, and finds some fault in each of them. Suddenly the World is taken ill, goes to consult a doctor, and confesses that his sickness is caused by the sinister predictions which are everywhere in circulation. “Is that all which troubles you?” cries the doctor, and he goes on in a strain which exhibits at once the spirit of the piece :—

“Monde, tu ne te troubles pas
De voir ces hommes attrapards
Vendre et acheter bénéfices ;
Les enfans en bras des nourrices
Estre abbés, évêques, prieurs,
Chevaucher très bien les deux sœurs,
Tuer les gens pour leur plaisirs,” &c.

The piece concludes by the World being clad in the garb of a fool. These two pieces were printed at Lyons, which was a stronghold of the party of the Reformers until after the terrible massacres which took place there in the religious wars. An equally courageous satire against the court of Rome,—the play of the “Prince des Sots, or Mère Sotte,” by the celebrated Pierre Gringore, in which Mère Sotte

represents the Church of Rome, was performed at Paris in 1511. The license given to pieces of this character at this period is explained by the circumstance, that France and Rome were at war, and that the French court feared much less from the chance of an approaching reformation, than from the secular ambition of the popes.

From her particular position in the political world, France became during the sixteenth century the battle-field of the Reformation; and it is to the literature of that country that we shall chiefly restrict our remarks. The advocates of the new opinions acted there with more boldness, because they could easily find a refuge from persecution in Italy or in Switzerland, and from the latter country—which has been termed the arsenal of the Reformation—they no less easily inundated France with their writings.

Many of the learned Frenchmen of the age of Francis I. were more or less compromised in the Reformation, and were subsequently persecuted for their opinions. The most remarkable of these were assembled at the court of the beautiful and witty Queen of Navarre, who at that period prided herself no less upon her scepticism in religious opinions, than upon her literary taste. Others, such as Beza, Pierre Viret, Varel, &c. took their stand more openly and decidedly in the ranks of Luther and Calvin. Several anonymous satirical publications have been attributed to Beza, but, as it appears, with little reason. In 1542, Erasmus Albertus, a Lutheran minister, published in Latin the celebrated "*Alcoran des Cordeliers*," which was frequently reprinted in Latin and in French, and which may in some measure be considered as taking the lead among the

earlier satirical treatises of the *bonâ-fide* reformers. It was more especially directed against the “*Liber Conformitatum*,” or the Book of Conformities between St. Francis and our Saviour; and consists of a selection of absurd miracles and legends from that book, the object being to prove from it, that Christ was a mere precursor of St. Francis, who was to the Cordeliers what Mahommed was to the Mussulmans, or, as Luther expresses it in the “*Letter to the Christian Reader*” prefixed, “*Hinc sequitur, quod Christus veluti figura Francisci, nihil sit amplius; id quod et Turci sentiunt.*” In 1552, Pierre Viret, in a work full of the bitterest satire, entitled “*La Physique Papale*,” undertook to prove that the ceremonies and rites of the Romish Church were nothing but paganism. In this book, which is composed in the form of dialogues, Viret finds the Roman catholic purgatory in the pagan writers of antiquity, he laughs at the various virtues of holy water, declares that the priests had rivalled the discovery of the philosopher’s stone, by the facility with which they turned benefices, indulgences, &c. into money; and compares the scandalous lives of the monks with the orgies of the priests of Cybele. Pierre Viret published several other books of the same stamp, most of which were printed at Geneva. In France, books of this description were the subject of strict prohibition, and the writers were exposed to cruel persecutions, even when their productions were of a much less hardy character. Etienne Dolet, a rich and learned printer of Lyons, who had introduced the philosophical manner of reasoning of the platonists, was burnt alive for atheism, at Paris, in 1546. In a poetical complaint, written while in prison, he deprecates the vengeance of his theological persecutors:—

“ Quand on m’aura ou bruslé, ou pendu,
 Mis sur la roue, et en quartiers fendu,
 Qu’en sera-t-il ? ce sera un corps mort !
 Las ! toutefois n’aurait-on nul remord ?

* * * *

Ung homme est-il de valeur si petite,
 Sitôt muni de science et vertu,
 Pour estre, ainsi qu’une paille ou festu,
 Annihilé ? Fait-on si peu de compte
 D’ung noble esprit qui mainte autre surmonte ?”

The celebrated poet, Clement Marot, for similar opinions, was obliged to fly from a similar fate, and spent some of the best years of his life in exile. The most remarkable satirists of this age, however, are to be found not among the open Protestants, but amongst the scoffers, and of these the first in date and in rank was Rabelais.

What we know of the life of Francois Rabelais, pictures him to us as a restless-minded, though joyous and witty person, greedy of learning, and not less so of novelty. He was born about the year 1483, and became a monk of the Franciscan order, in the convent of Fontenay-le-Comte, in Poitou, where he excited the jealousy and hatred of his more illiterate brethren by studying Greek and other suspected branches of learning. Having carried his contempt for their ignorance beyond the bounds of prudence, he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the subterranean dungeons of the convent, from which, however, he was saved by the interference of some of his secular friends. He had in the sequel sufficient influence to procure, in 1524, an indult of pope Clement VII, authorizing him to change his order for the more learned one of the Benedictines ; but instead of taking the habit, he embraced the life of a

secular priest, and attached himself to the person of Geoffroi d'Estissac, bishop of Maillezais, a distinguished patron of learned men, who made him his secretary. Among the scholars who assembled at the bishop's table, he met many favourers of the Reformation, and he took little pains to conceal his own contempt for the Church of Rome and its monks. "Some," says an old writer, "say that he became a Lutheran, and others that he became an atheist." He formed at this period an acquaintance with Calvin, who, like himself, was distinguished by his love of Greek literature. At this moment a rigorous persecution of innovators in religious matters excited by the catholic clergy in 1530, cast a gloom over the literary society in which Rabelais moved. Clement Marot was prosecuted for eating bacon in Lent. Bonaventure des Periers was denounced as an atheist by the abbot of St. Evroul, for words which he had uttered in unguarded conversation. Others were threatened; and Louis Berquin, accused of Lutheranism, was condemned to the stake by the parliament of Paris, and burnt along with his writings on the 13th of April, 1530. Terrified by this event, many concealed their opinions, or withdrew themselves for a time from public view; others sought safety in exile; Rabelais went to Montpellier, and devoted all his energies to the study of medicine. In 1532 he changed his residence to Lyons, invited probably by his friend Etienne Dolet, and commenced his literary career, by editing Greek and Latin authors. Popular tradition informs us that these literary labours were not successful. The sale of an edition of some of the writings of Hippocrates and Galen, is said to have been too small to repay the expenses of printing, and

Rabelais, to indemnify his publisher, and to revenge himself on the bad taste of the public, gave to the world, before the end of the year 1532, the first sketch of the burlesque romance of Gargantua, under the title of "Chronique Gargantuine," the object of which (if any) appears to have been to turn to ridicule the romances of chivalry, which then enjoyed great popularity. In the following year appeared the first sketch of "Pantagruel." The success of these publications was extraordinary, and led him to modify and enlarge them, making them the frame-work of a keen and searching satire on the vices of the church and of society at large.

To understand the real character of the burlesque writings of Rabelais, we ought to be well acquainted with the older satirical literature of the middle ages, of which the histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel present in some measure a compendium. Rabelais represents *en grand* that spirit of mockery at the church which issued from its own bosom, and which, even when the standard of the reformation had been unfurled, the church could hardly resolve to prosecute. A multitude of burlesque tracts, quite in the character of Gargantua, had been issuing from the French printing-offices almost from the first introduction of the art into that country; and they continued to enjoy a very extensive popularity under the comic pseudonymes of Bruscombille, Turlupin, Jacques Bonhomme, &c. during the whole of the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth centuries. Rabelais differed chiefly from the writers of these pieces by the superiority of his genius and his extensive erudition. It was an error of his editors in later times to suppose that his work was a romantic history of his

age, and that all the actors in the public transactions of the day were represented under his burlesque heroes. Rabelais appears to have commenced without any fixed plan; the strokes of personal satire were evidently after-thoughts, which struck him as he proceeded, but the satirical aim of the whole is general and not particular, in this respect resembling the more ancient satires of "Reynard" and "Piers Ploughman." The satirical character of Pantagruel appears to have increased with the publication of each successive portion, until it required all the influence of the author's powerful friends in church and state to secure him the liberty to write with impunity. The law, the overbearing and unlearned theologians, the persecuting Sorbonne, the intriguing ecclesiastics, and above all the licentious grovelling monks, became in turn the butt of his ridicule. The latter were the objects of his special hatred. In the conclusion of his second book, he speaks of them as "a great rabble of squint-minded fellows, dissembling and counterfeit saints, demure lookers, hypocrites, pretended zealots, tough friars, buskin monks, and other such sects of men, who disguise themselves like maskers to deceive the world; for whilst they give the common people to understand that they are busied about nothing but contemplation and devotion in fastings, and maceration of their sensuality—and that only to sustain and aliment the small frailty of their humanity: it is so far otherwise, that, on the contrary, God knows what cheer they make; *et curios simulant, sed Bacchanalia vivunt*. You may read it in great letters in the colouring of their red snouts and gulching bellies as big as a tun." And in the prologue to the third book: "Get you back, hypocrites;

to your sheep, dogs ; get you gone, you dissemblers in the devil's name. Hay ! what are you there yet ? I renounce my part of Papimania, if I snap you—!" The monks and doctors in theology set up a cry of fury on the appearance of this third book, which they denounced as an abominable heap of impieties. There were not wanting persons to accuse its author of direct atheism. In defence he urged his professional character of a physician, declared that his writings were only intended to exhilarate and console the sick, and branded his monkish caluminators with the expressive and energetic appellations of "*cafards, cagots, matagots, bottineurs, burgots, patepelues, porteurs de rogatons, chatemites, vrais diables engiponnés,*" words the force of which it would be impossible to render in English. Rabelais found protection in the manners of the age. A kind of secret society, a jovial freemasonry, appears to have been formed by the influence of his writings, which was joined by numbers of young nobles and gentlemen who had been gained by the libertinism and scepticism of the poets, and who became known by the name of *Pantagruelists*. "*Chacun s'est voulu mêler de Pantagruéliser,*" says Du Verdier, who was nearly a contemporary ; and Rabelais himself, in a *nouveau prologue* to his fourth book, defines *Pantagruelism* as a *certaine gaieté d'esprit confite en mépris des choses fortuites*. In fact there is the same strong taint of Epicureanism in the philosophy of Rabelais, which appears so constantly in the court poets of the voluptuous age of Francis I. Even Clement Marot, who subsequently became a declared Protestant, was then a *Pantagruelist*, and did not hesitate to proclaim the practical advantages of the abbey of Theleme :—

“ S'on nous laissat nos jours en paix user,
 Du temps présent à plaisir disposer,
 Et librement vivre comme il faut vivre,
 Palais et cours ne nous faudroit plus suivre ;
 Plaids ne procès, ne les riches maisons,
 Avec leur gloire et enfumés blasons.
 Mais, sous belle ombre, en chambre et galeries,
 Nous pourmenans, livres et railleries,
 Dames et bains, seroient les passetemps,
 Lieux, et labeurs de nos esprits contens.”

The Protestants were entirely disappointed in Rabelais. From the boldness with which the writers of his school attacked the errors of Rome, they expected to see them join in the work of reformation, but they soon found that they were scoffers and not reformers ; that, in fact, they were of those who, to use the words of the poet—

“ Bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
 And still revolt when truth would set them free ;
 Licence they mean when they cry Liberty ;
 For who loves that must first be wise and good.”

The Reformers were disgusted by the mixture of obscenity and libertinism which characterized their writings ; and their disappointment was complete when they saw Rabelais himself accept a benefice from the Church of Rome, and become curé of Meudon. Calvin had strongly expressed his dissatisfaction at the conduct of his friend in his book “ *De Scandalis*,” which gave so much offence to the satirist that, in his fourth book, he classed with the *matagots*, *cagots*, *et papelards*, who had so often been the object of his ridicule before, “ *Les démoniacles Calvins, imposteurs de Genève*.”

The most remarkable writer of the school of sceptics which had been formed at the court of the Queen of Navarre, was Bonaventure des Periers, who had

succeeded Clement Marot as valet-de-chambre of that princess, in 1536. When she was no longer able to defend the poet from the persecutions of his enemies, Des Periers marked his sentiments in favour of his predecessor, who had fled to Geneva, by his "*Apologie pour Marot absent, contre Saon*," printed at Lyons, in 1537; and in the same year he caused to be printed, under the strictest secrecy, and without any name of author, his "*Cymbalum Mundi*." This work, a model of French composition, consists of four dialogues, in the style and spirit of Lucian (whom he has imitated with great success), the interlocutors being evidently intended to represent living persons (among whom was Clement Marot himself), whose names are concealed by anagrams and other devices. The scepticism of the author is apparent throughout—he sneers at the Romish Church as an imposture, ridicules the Protestants as seekers after the philosopher's stone, and even treats Christianity with contempt. It is clear enough that Des Periers was not a reformer:—his book was the strongest declaration that had been made of the Epicurean principles of the school to which he belonged. It was secretly printed at Paris by Jean Morin, in the Rue St. Jacques—the immediate vicinity of the Sorbonne; but some information of its character had undoubtedly been made public, for the whole impression was seized at the printer's, on the 6th of March, 1538, and Jean Morin was thrown into prison. In the entry on the registers of the parliament, it is stated that the inquisitor "had caused his shop to be searched, and had found several unwise and erroneous books in it, which had come from Germany, especially from Clement Marot, which were prepared for the press and

intended to have been printed. He said, also, that some theologians had warned him that there were at present in this city several foreign printers and booksellers, who sold only books which contained erroneous opinions, which it was necessary to look to immediately." The printer of the "Cymbalum" was treated with rigour, and it is probable that he disclosed the name of the author; the book was publicly burnt. Bonaventure des Periers retired to Lyons, where another edition was published, which also was burnt; and the author, terrified by the pursuits which were instituted against him, put an end to his own life, apparently, in the year 1539. This book had given equal offence to the Protestants and to the Catholics.

Des Periers is said by some to have had a principal hand in the composition of the "Heptameron," or collection of tales published under the name of the queen of Navarre. A collection of tales was published under his own name a few years after his death, which there can be no doubt were his compositions, under the title of "Les Contes, ou les Nouvelles Récréations et Joyeux Devis de Bonaventure des Periers." It is one of the best story-books of that age, and, as might be expected, is full of traits of satire against the monks and priests, who appear here, as in the Protestant satirists, in the character of ignorant voluptuaries. As an example, we may give one of his anecdotes of the curé of Brou:—

"This curé had a way of his own to chant the different offices of the church; and above all he disliked the way of saying the Passion in the manner it was ordinarily said in churches, and he chanted it quite differently. For when our Lord said anything to the Jews, or Pilate, he made him talk high and loud,

so that everybody could hear him. And when it was the Jews or somebody else who spoke, he spoke so low, that he could scarcely be heard at all.

“ It happened that a lady of rank and importance, on her way to Châteaudun to keep there the festival of Easter, passed through Brou on Good Friday, about ten o'clock in the morning, and wishing to hear service, she went to the church where the curé was officiating. When it came to the Passion, he said it in his own manner, and made the whole church ring again when he said *Quem quæritis?* But when it came to the reply, *Jesum Nazarenum*, he spoke as low as he possibly could. And in this manner he continued the Passion. The lady who was very devout, and, for a woman, well-informed in the Holy Scriptures and attentive to the ecclesiastical ceremonies, felt scandalised at this mode of chanting, and wished she had never entered the church. She had a mind to speak to the curé, and tell him what she thought of it; and for this purpose sent for him to come to her after the service. When he was come, she said to him, ‘Monsieur le Curé, I don't know where you have learnt to officiate on a day like this, when the people ought to be all humility. But to hear you perform the service, is enough to drive away anybody's devotion.’ ‘How so, madame?’ said the curé. ‘How so?’ said she, ‘you have said a Passion contrary to all rules of decency. When our Lord speaks you cry as if you were in the town-hall; and when it is a Caiaphas, or a Pilate, or the Jews, you speak softly like a young bride. Is this becoming in one like you? are you fit to be a curé? If you had what you deserve, you would be turned out of your benefice, and then you would be made to know your fault!’

When the curate had very attentively listened to her, 'Is this what you had to say to me, madame?' said he. 'By my soul! it is very true, what they say; and the truth is, that there are many people who talk of things which they do not understand. Madame, I believe that I know my office as well as another, and I beg all the world to know that God is as well served in this parish according to its condition as in any place within a hundred leagues of it. I know very well that the other curés chant the Passion quite differently; I could easily chant it like them if I would; but they don't understand their business at all. I should like to know if it becomes those rogues of Jews to speak as loud as our Lord? No, no, madame; rest assured that in my parish it is my will that God be the master, and He shall be as long as I live; and let the others do in their parishes according to their understanding.'"

Perhaps we may be pardoned for giving another sample of the same material.

"There was a priest of a village who was as proud as might be, because he had seen a little more than his Cato; for he had read '*De Syntaxi*,' and his '*Fauste precor gelida*.'* And this made him set up his feathers and talk very grand, using words that filled his mouth, in order to make people think him a great doctor. Even at confession he made use of terms which astonished the poor people. One day he was confessing a poor working man, of whom he asked, 'Here, now, my friend, tell me, art thou not ambitious?' The poor man said no, thinking this was a word which belonged to great lords, and almost

* The commencement of the first eclogue of Baptista Mantuanus.

repented of having come to confess to this priest; for he had already heard that he was such a great clerk, and that he spoke so grandly, that nobody understood him, which he now knew by this word *ambitious*; for although he might have heard it somewhere, yet he did not know at all what it was. The priest went on to ask, 'Art thou a fornicator?' 'No,' said the labourer, who understood as little as before. 'Art thou not a gourmand?' said the priest. 'No.' 'Art thou not superbe (*proud*)?' 'No.' 'Art thou not iracund?' 'No.' The priest, seeing the man answer always 'no,' was somewhat surprised. 'Art thou not concupiscent?' 'No.' 'And what art thou, then?' said the priest. 'I am,' said he, 'a mason: here is my trowel!'"

The persecutions directed against Marot, Des Perriers, and others, broke up and scattered the literary society which had been kept together by the smiles of the queen of Navarre, and with them the class of literature which they especially represented lost its *éclat*. The numerous story-tellers and "pantagruelian" writers of the following age are now consigned to the shelves of the bibliomaniac; they are most of them beneath criticism, and were evidently intended for no very elegant class of readers. Among the exceptions, we must not overlook the productions of Noel du Fail, a gentleman of Britany, lord of La Hérissaye, who published, under the anagram of his name, in or before 1548, his "Propos Rustiques;" in the same year, his "Baliverneries; ou, Contes Nouveaux d'Eutrapel;" and at a later period, after his death, appeared the "Contes et Discours d'Eutrapel." This last is perhaps his most finished work; at times we perceive an attempt at imitating Rabelais;

the Romish clergy make no creditable figure in his facetious stories, some of which are licentious enough ; but he had taken warning by the suffering of his more unfortunate brethren, and he commences his last-mentioned work by a kind of profession of the orthodoxy of his religion, and ends it with a zealous tirade against all atheists and those who live inattentive to God.

While the scoffing followers of Rabelais were thus undermining the influence of the church among the higher orders of society, the party which supported the Protestant reformers were not inactive among the middle and lower classes ; and besides preaching and the distribution of religious tracts, we find the satirical songs against the Romanists increasing in number and bitterness as we approach the period of the great troubles and massacres. From the perishable nature of these productions, and the care that was taken to suppress them, the number of those which now exist is naturally small. But we perceive easily that they became more violent as the religious parties were constantly dragged more and more into identity with the political distractions of the kingdom. This becomes strongly apparent when the ambitious family of Guise raised itself upon the ruin of the monarchy, on the death of Henry II, in 1559. The severe epigram which was written on that occasion, found many a tongue to repeat it:—

“ Le feu roi devina ce point,
Que ceux de la maison de Guise
Mettroient ses enfans en pourpoint,
Et son pauvre peuple en chemise.”

To give more vogue to their productions, the Huguenot song-writers parodied the words of popular airs,

in a manner which is sometimes grotesque in the extreme. A song on the champion of the French Protestants, the Prince de Condé, in 1563, after the victory at Dreux, was thus composed to the air:—

“Ce petit homme tant joly
Tousjours devise et tousjours rit,
Et tousjours baise sa mignonne;
Dieu gard’ de mal le petit homme!”

and commences,—

“Le petit homme a si bien fait,
Qu’à la parfin il a deffait
Les abus du pape de Romme;
Dieu gard’ de mal le petit homme!
Ce petit homme tant joly,” &c.

The song celebrates the anti-papist exploits of the chiefs of the party of the “petit homme,” and goes on to tell us that,—

“Le petit homme estoit venu
Dedans Paris, où est cogneu
Ennemi du pape de Romme;
Dieu gard’ de mal le petit homme!”

“Les cocus qui étoient dedans,
Armez de fer jusques aux dens
Deffendans le pape de Romme,—
Dieu gard’, &c.

“N’osèrent se mettre dehors;
Car on les eux tuez tous mors,
Nonobstant le pape de Rome.
Dieu gard,” &c.

It concludes with a thanksgiving for the success which had attended the cause,—

“Après tant de belliqueux faits,
Le roy nous a donné la paix
En dépit du pape de Romme;
Dieu gard’ de mal le petit homme!”

“ Loué soit Dieu, qui, des hauts cieux,
 Nous donne ce bien précieux !
 Remercié soit de tout homme
 Détestant le pape de Romme ! ”

The “ petit homme ” was slain in 1569, when in arms for the Protestant cause ; and his death was made the subject of a song by one of the Catholic party, who represents (somewhat unfoundedly) his princess lamenting the pretended evil counsels of the party of whom he had been one of the principal leaders. She is made to say,—

“ Or le grand vice de ceste loi nouvelle [the Protestant faith]
 Contre son roy l'avoit mise en querelle,
 Luy promettant tousjours le maintenir,
 Mais à la charge vous prinste à fuyr.”

“ Et vous, ministres, avec vos faces pâles,
 Vous estes cause de malheurs et diffames.
 Vous luy disièz : monseigneur, sans esmoy
 Nous mourrons tous, ou nous vous ferons roy.”

The Catholics were not, indeed, behindhand with their adversaries in spreading abroad popular songs and libels ; but satire is a weapon which in general tells with less effect in the hands of the persecutor than in those of the persecuted. Those who burn people seldom laugh at them, for if they did laugh at them they could not burn them afterwards with the same good grace. The French Anti-Protestant satirical writings of the sixteenth century are in general mere collections of vulgar insults and scandalous calumnies. The only accusation which the Papists brought with any appearance of reason against the Huguenots, was that of troubling the peace of the kingdom ; and this cry was raised against them long before they could in any way be looked upon as the aggressors. A song composed as early as the year

1525, warns the “bons Francoys” against the “méchans Luthériens maudis ;” and there are still preserved as rarities several collections of songs against the Huguenots, composed during the troubles of the age of Charles IX, all breathing the spirit we have alluded to, with such burdens as,—

“Cessez voz grands saults,
Mastins Huguenots !”

and some of them even vaunting and exulting over the horrible massacres which were then the order of the day in that unhappy country. The attempt was still more vain, of some of the Catholic satirists, to charge the Protestant preachers with the same vices and irregularities for which the monks and priests had made themselves too notorious. We may merely cite as a remarkable specimen of this mode of attacking the Protestants, the tract entitled “*Passevent Parisien respondant à Pasquin Rommain de la vie de ceulx qui. . . se disent vivre selon la reformation de l’Evangile,*” printed, probably at Lyons, in 1556. This scandalous tract has been attributed to Anthoine Cathelan, a French Cordelier, who left his convent, and went to Geneva in company with a prostitute, in 1556, but his real character being discovered, he was discarded by the Protestant leaders. He then behaved himself so disgracefully that he was obliged to return hastily to France, to escape being publicly flogged, and there he made his peace with the Catholics by writing libels against Calvin and the other preachers of the reform. The book of which we are speaking is composed in the form of a dialogue; Pasquin of Rome asks, “How do the Evangelicals live?” The reply is, “They call one another brothers and sisters.” “Is it true that they all marry?”

“They have each a wife in public, and in private as many as they like.” “Tell me then, how does the venerable Calvin live?” “He kept in his house during five years a nun of Albi, at two écus a month, to make his bed. In the fifth year, the nun finding herself four months advanced with child, M. de Rocayrols, formerly canon of Albi, and her favourite, was obliged to come to Geneva and marry her, on pain of being accused by Calvin in his country as a Lutheran. Calvin accompanied the nun to Lausanne disguised as a *courier de poste*, and the marriage ceremony was performed in the church served by Viret, while Calvin went to preach at Neufchatel in Farel’s church!” All the most distinguished reformers are treated in the same style. Every one knew that these were impudent lies; but they had their use in exciting the vulgar against the Huguenot preachers. Such base personal accusations against the best of men were very common in this demoralised age. Men of higher character and position in the world than ribald monks did not hesitate to employ such means to decry and abase their opponents. The Catholics scrupled not to accuse the Protestants in general of joining in horrible orgies, with all the disgusting particulars of the supposed Sabbaths of the sorcerers, or those which were laid (perhaps with no better reason) to the charge of some of the worst heresies of the primitive church; and they diligently spread about the report that their preachings, which their persecutors obliged them to hold in private, were secret meetings for debauch and libertinism, in order thus to incite and give a colour to the outrages to which they were afterwards exposed. We are informed by a contemporary, and, though a Protestant

and partisan, not an unfair historian, La Planche, that in 1559, soon after the death of Henri II, the Catholic party in Paris made use of means of this kind to justify their violence. Two Protestant tradesmen had each of them an apprentice whom they were in the habit of taking to their assemblies, but who having afterwards turned out disobedient, and run away to escape the punishment of their faults, were taken in hands by the priests, and not only made to confess the houses where the assemblies of Protestants were held, and the names of those who attended, but to promise to say whatever the priests put into their mouths. The houses were accordingly attacked, broken open, and plundered by the officers and rabble, and the families accused were all seized and committed to prison, while the mob carried on the work of devastation in their dwellings. When the affair was laid before the magistrates, the two run-away apprentices were brought forward to declare upon their oaths that they had been present at great meetings of the "Lutherans" with their masters, and that on one occasion, on the Thursday before Easter, about midnight, after they had preached, they made their Sabbath, eat a pig, instead of paschal lamb, and then, having put out the lights, "*chacun prit sa chacune*," &c., and gave other details of a similar character. Of course, no one was allowed to come forward on the contrary side, the evidence was collected, the persons immediately accused died in prison, and the rabble, as we are told, found rich plunder in their houses, which they were allowed to retain, to encourage and incite them to be "good Christians," and to hate heretics.

Printing was at this period not a mere mercenary trade; for many of the earlier printers were not only

men of deep learning and high respectability, but they were staunch and enlightened advocates of religious and civil liberty, at a period when such things were but ill understood. The most remarkable family whose names figure in the history of this art, was, without doubt, that of the Etiennes, or as they are usually called by English writers, the Stephens, which alone by its learning and high qualities would cover the profession with glory. The first Robert Etienne, the author of the "*Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ*," was banished from France for the boldness of his opinions. One branch of his family settled as printers at Geneva. His brother Henri, to whom we owe the "*Thesaurus Linguae Græcæ*," walked in the same path, and it is to him we owe the most remarkable, and perhaps the most influential, satire against the Romish Church which appeared during the sixteenth century, the "*Apologie pour Hérodoté*," which certainly merits, as much as any of the publications at the head of our article, a reprint, both as a historical monument belonging to the literature of France, and as a fine specimen of pure French composition.

The origin of this book was somewhat similar to the traditional account of that of the *Gargantua* of Rabelais. Henri Etienne had published at a great expense an edition of Herodotus in Greek and Latin, which was violently decried by his enemies of the Romish Church as a book full of incredible stories and fit only to put its readers asleep. Etienne undertook to write the apology of his author, and at the same time to avenge himself upon his detractors. He observes that all old historians are full of extraordinary and sometimes incredible narratives, but that it would be a tyrannical kind of criticism to oblige

them to tell nothing but what we can easily believe. He then proceeds to show that the history of modern times furnished matter equally, if not more, extraordinary and incredible (if it were not known to be too true), than any former age. Hence the book was originally entitled, “*Traité de la Conformité des Merveilles Anciennes avec les Modernes, ou Introduction d’une Apologie pour Hérodote.*” It was published in 1565.

This book opens with a somewhat serious dissertation on the condition of the Golden Age, and on the sense in which that title ought to be taken, which leads to the comparison of the perversity of the various ages of the world. Some, the author says, raise too high the moral virtues of antiquity, whilst others debase the ancients with equal injustice. The author then goes on to dwell upon the extreme viciousness of the middle ages—the period when the popish church was paramount,—which he illustrates and proves by a multiplicity of extracts from the old popular Romish preachers of France and Italy, Olivier Maillard, Michel Menot, and Michel de Bareleta. He deduces from the authority of writers like these, that the ages of Romanism had presented one general scene of vice, in which all classes had participated, ecclesiastics as well as laics,—that the world had been sunk in greater depravity than in the worst period of paganism. He next illustrates, by innumerable anecdotes and facts, the perversity of the age in which he lived, which he thought was becoming worse rather than better, and this part of his subject occupies the larger part of his book. Many of the anecdotes here given were the popular stories and jokes of the day, and were certainly novels

rather than true history; but we know that such compositions convey to us an exact picture of the character of the age in which they were composed, although they are not individual facts. Nevertheless, there is a full sufficiency of authentic facts in the book to bear out the author's deductions.

Etienne proceeds, then, to show that the extreme perversity of the present age was sufficient to justify us in putting faith in the accounts given by Herodotus, or other ancient authors, of any degree of extraordinary depravity in former times. Every class of society, the church and the laity, were equally contaminated, and, instead of suppressing wickedness, people in authority seemed only to aim at giving impunity to vice. Obscene and licentious songs, and everything calculated to corrupt the hearing and the sight, were repeated under the very nose of the ecclesiastics, without reproof—nay, even with approbation; but if you should happen to be heard with a hymn or a psalm in your mouth, you are threatened with the faggot, or with the “*chambre ardente*.” The kingdom was filled with atheism and impiety; which had been fostered in the scoffing school of Rabelais and Bonaventure des Periers, whom Henri Etienne mentions by name. He then describes the state of wretchedness to which the world was reduced by the rapacity of bandits, by the wholesale butcheries of the religious wars, by the dishonesty and imposture of merchants, by the injustice of magistrates, by the oppressions of the great, by the luxury and avarice of the clergy, who appeared now to have thrown aside all feeling of shame. In fact, he tells us that the clergy of his time appeared to have done “like women who, as long as their wan-

derings from the path of virtue are not discovered, do all they can to keep up a little outside appearance of modesty, and are even accessible to some remains of shame; but when they see that their profligacy is made public, and, as the proverb has it, ‘les petit enfans en vont à la moutarde,’ then they do with open doors what they did before secretly; and, in despite of those who talk of it, are three times more profligate than before. So, say I, have messieurs the churchmen done (at least the greater part of them), when they saw there was no longer means of covering their simonies and their various traffics, their licentiousness and all sorts of dissoluteness.”

Their shamelessness had, indeed, become by this time proverbial; and Etienne cites, somewhat wag-gishly, the Latin epigram of Buchanan on the ecclesiastic who had been accused of Lutheranism, but who had been readily cleared and acquitted by his “episcopal” manners:—

“Esse Lutheranium rumor te, Gaurice, clamat:
Sed tuus antistes te tamen esse negat.
Tam scortaris, ait, quam si vel episcopus esses;
Et potas dubiam pervigil usque diem;
Nec memor es Christi, nisi quum jurare libebit,
Nec scis Scripturæ vel breve iota sacræ
Nempe per hæc suevit nunquam fallentia signa
Ille vigil sanas noscere pastor oves.”

“Listen,” he says, “to the description of the virtuous qualities of true monks, as made by another prelate:—

“‘Pour nombrer les vertus d’un moine,
Il faut qu’il soit ord et gourmand,
Paresseux, paillard, mal-idoine,
Fol, lourd, yvrogne, et peu savant:
Qu’il se creve à table en buvant
Et en mangeant comme un pourceau.
Pourvu qu’il sache un peu de chant,
C’est assez, il est bon et beau.’”

Several successive chapters are filled with anecdotes of the vicious lives of the popish clergy of the sixteenth century, and the second part of the book is entirely devoted to the exposure of their ignorance, their bigotry and superstition, and their dishonesty in falsifying and adding to the text of the Holy Scriptures. Their sermons, he says, were less calculated to edify their audience, than to promote laughter. The ordinary mass-priests only read their service by rote, and were unable to translate even a few words of the language in which it was written. A number of stories of their ignorance in this respect are here brought together, such as that of the priest who carried a message to his bishop, who was at table, and when the latter asked him "Es tu dignus?" imagined that he meant "As-tu diné?" and answered immediately, "Nenni, monseigneur, mais je dînerai bien avec vos gens." If things had been so bad as here described, the question naturally presented itself, how happened it that they had been allowed to go on so long without reform? This question is answered by a detailed account of the methods used by the Romish Church to keep the body of the people in darkness and ignorance, and to repress every attempt at inquiry. In fine, Henri Etienne predicts that posterity will be astonished not only at the long continuance of all this folly and wickedness, but that so many people should have been sacrificed for the mere attempt to render their fellow-creatures wiser and better. The writer of a book like this was, as might be expected, exposed to a multitude of persecutions.

The sanguinary religious wars, now in their fury, appear for a moment to have stifled the voice of the press, until this gloomy period ended partially in the

horrors of the St. Barthelemi. Another monarch of the house of Valois sank into the tomb, and a successor of the same line, Henri III, was rapidly passing through his brief career, but the house of Guise still pursued its ambitious course. The religious parties were becoming daily more political—the watchwords of the contending factions were now more frequently Lorraine and Valois, than Rome and Geneva; although still the fate of the Reformation in France was intimately woven with that of Henri of Navarre, who continued to stand forth as the leader of the Huguenots. The greater part of the songs and popular libels published during the reign of Henri III, which have reached our time, were composed in favour of the duke of Guise. It was during this period that the famous “Ligue” came into existence, the object of which was not only to destroy the Protestant cause, but to snatch the crown from the house of Valois; and it even aimed undisguisedly at that of Elizabeth of England. The victory gained by the duke of Guise over the Reisters and the Huguenot party, at Auneau, in the November of 1587, was, to use the expression of a contemporary, “la cantique de la Ligue;” it raised to the highest pitch the hopes of the Spanish and ultra-papist party, and it was the excess of their exultations which first opened the eyes of the weak monarch on the throne to their real intentions. The numerous songs on this event show us more plainly than any other documents the spirit which actuated the Guisard faction. One of the first that offers itself to us, describes the execration in which the victors held the Huguenots, in the following words:—

“ Huguenots pleins de rage,
 Vous estes bien faschez,
 Plus n'avez de courage ;
 Vos Reistres sont cassez.
 Ils voudroient d'assurance
 Estre hors de France,
 Ou au pays lointain ;
 Ou bien à la Rochelle,
 Avec les infidelles
 Disciples de Calvin.”

In another, entitled the “ Testament of the Reistres,” we are told that they had left at La Rochelle a gallows and ladder, to hang all who would preach to the Calvinists :—

“ Ils ont laissé à La Rochelle
 Une potance et une échelle
 Pour les pendre et estrangler,
 Afin qu'il ne puisse prescher
 La loy des Calvinistes.”

And a whip at Geneva to flog Beza and the other preachers :—

“ Ils ont laissé dedans Genève
 Un fouet pour bien estriller Beze
 Et tous les autres predicans.”

In a third, after exulting over the defeat of the heretics :—

“ Tremblez, tremblez, hérétiques, maintenant,
 Car vous n'avez plus le temps,
 Vos ministres sont brouys,—”

the poet-partisan goes on to wish that the “ noble duke ” with his valiant soldiers were in England, to “ reform the laws of Luther and Calvin,” and fill their pockets with “ nobles and angels.”

“ Si on estoit passé au pays Anglois,
 On réformeroit les loix
 De Luther et de Calvin.

* * * *

Les soldats François voudroient bien à ceste fois
 Voir le pays d'Angleterre ;
 Ils se chargeroient de nobles et d'angelots
 Pour bouter à leurs thrésors.”

In another violent Guisard song, composed a little later, Queen Elizabeth is treated with the title of Jezebel:—

“ Lorsque les Catholiques François
 Seront par le roy de Navarre
 Traictiez comme sont les Anglois
 Par la Jezabel d'Angleterre.”

The licence of the press had been increasing during the reign of Henri III, and on the murder of the duke of Guise and his brother the cardinal of Lorraine by his order, and the subsequent murder of the king by the agency of the Ligue, the fury of the popular writers knew no bounds. Pamphlets, and songs, and caricatures poured forth daily, filled with insult and reproach, and expressed in the most violent language which could be imagined, by the furious bigotry of the catholic preachers on the one hand, and by the irritated loyalty of the other. Some of the most conspicuous among the satirical libels published by the Ligue at this time, are “La Vie et Faits notables de Henri de Valois,” “Les Sorcelleries de Henri de Valois,” and “Le Martyre des deux Frères.” The first of these pieces is said to have been composed by Jean Boucher, curé of St. Benoit in Paris, whose violent sermons had so much influence on the Liguers. It was printed in Paris towards

the end of the year 1588, and was intended by its virulence against the king, who is proclaimed as a hypocrite and apostate, to excite the people to rebellion. The others are written, if possible, in a still more virulent spirit, were also printed in Paris, and their object was evidently to prepare the way for the dethronement of the king, who, in the last, is described as a "Turk by the head, a German by the body, a harpy by the hands, an Englishman by the garter, a Pole by the feet, and a devil in soul!" A host of popular songs conveyed the same sentiments and aimed at the same end. The king was compared to the parricide Nero:—

"Je ne peux mieux acomparer ta vie
Qu'à celle-là de ce cruel Néron.
Semblable à toi, il estoit plein d'envie,
De cruauté, rancune, et trahison."

The city of Blois, where the king had taken up his residence, when he made his escape from the hands of the Liguers, is cursed for harbouring him:—

"Malheur sur toi, ville de Blois,
Qui enclos ce trahistre Vallois,
Qui fut vray fils d'une chimère!
Mais malheur, dis-je, non sur toy,
Mais advienne à ce tyran roy,
Qui fait dans ton corps son repaire."

For the title of "très-chrétien" had in this instance been borne by a worthless dog:—

"Ce plus que trop enragé chien
Portoit tiltre de très-chrétien."

There is something fiendish in the exultation of the Liguers on the death of the king in 1589, murdered by the knife of the Jacobin monk, Jacques Clement,

who suffered the penalty he merited, but who was held up as a saint and martyr by his own party. A song entitled "The Cleverness of the Jacobin," begins with the following description of the exploit, in a style worthy of the *sansculottes* of the later French Revolution:—

" Il sortit de Paris
 Un homme illustre et saint,
 De la religion
 Des frères Jacobins.
 Qui portait une lettre
 A Henry le vaurien ;
 Il tira de sa manche
 Un couteau bien à poinct,
 Dont il frappa Henry
 Au-dessoubz du pourpoint,
 Droit dans le petit ventre,
 Dedans son gras boudin."

And ends with a prayer that the murderer might be received in heaven for his deed:—

" Nous prions Dieu pour l'âme
 De l'heureux Jacobin,
 Qu'il reçoive son âme
 En son trosne divin !"

In fact, it was God himself, according to another of these songs, who instigated this "good priest and monk, who had always possessed a good soul," to the fearful deed:—

" Mais Dieu . . mouvant le cœur dévotieux
 De Jacques Clement de Sorbonne,
 Bon prestre et bon religieux,
 Qui toujours a eu l'âme bonne,

" A tuer ce tyran maudit,
 Ce qu'il a fait de galant homme,
 Voyant qu'il estoit interdit
 Par notre saint père de Rome.

“ Avec un couteau bien petit
 Il a tué ce roy inique,
 Ce tyran meschant et maudit,
 Vray ennemy du catholique.”

According to a third of these songs, which recommends a temple to be erected to the “saint religieux,” who had been “guided by the Holy Spirit” to commit this execrable murder, the Béarnais (Henri IV.) was destined to the same fate:—

“ L'on luy crevera la pance,
 Soit aujourd'huy ou demain.”

In reading productions like these, we are led involuntarily to exclaim with the poet of old, “Tantum relligio potuit!”—could deeds like these ever be made to pass for acts of holiness? The songs of the other party began now, however, to be more powerful than those of the Liguers, and they told a different story of the Jacobin “martyr:”—

“ Les Ligeurs n'ont point de foy,
 Ils ont fait tuer leur roy,
 Par un traistre Jacobin
 Dont ils font un martyre.”

Jacques Clement, according to the pamphlets of the royalists, was a profligate bigot, who had been urged on by the Liguers, and especially by the duchess of Montpensier, the sister of the duke of Guise, to the murder of his sovereign—they even openly accused the beautiful duchess of having abandoned her person to the monk on the condition of his taking an oath to perpetrate this deed. A multitude of violently satirical publications were now sent forth by the adherents of the king of Navarre, whom, on the murder of the

king, they had immediately proclaimed as Henri IV. A glance through the journal of Pierre L'Estoille will show best how rapidly these tracts succeeded each other—*fourmillèrent* is the word used by this writer. The Liguers were entire masters of the presses of Paris, Lyons, Rouen, and other large towns, and had in their pay an inconceivable multitude of scurrilous and violent writers and preachers, constantly occupied in exciting the passions of the multitude. On the side of the royalists were a few men, of surpassing talents, who did their best to make head against the formidable inundation of pamphlets with books written in a strain of satire and pleasantry of a much higher order, but which aimed more at the good sense and reason than at the passions of their readers. One of the most bitter of these tracts is "Le Masque de la Ligue découvert," printed at Tours in 1590, in which the Ligue is branded as a more hideous monster than any of those which had been subdued by the force of Hercules—as a horrible Megæra—as a cursed pernicious sorceress! *Ces frocs, ces cuculles, ces monstres, ces horreurs infernales, ces furies*, are the terms which this writer applies to the bigoted adherents of the party of Spain and the pope. Still the literary advantage remained on the other side, until, at the end of the year 1593, a small party of royalist writers joined in composing the famous "Satyre Ménippée," a *chef-d'œuvre* of satire, the appearance of which was almost a second Ivry for Henri IV. With this book the literary superiority changed sides; and, from the moment of its publication, writer after writer took up the pen to scatter ridicule and sarcasm on the *sainte union*. So great was the success of this satire, that within four

weeks of its first appearance as many large editions had been bought up.

The subject of the “*Satyre Ménippée*” was the meeting of the States, called together by the duke of Mayenne, on the 10th of February, 1593, for the purpose of electing a new king, in opposition to Henri IV, but which, as is well known, was rendered abortive by the difference of opinion which arose within the bosom of the assembly. The history of this remarkable monument of the literature of the sixteenth century is somewhat obscure, although the names of the principal writers have been preserved—a small society of scholars who had been accustomed to meet together in Paris, until scattered abroad by the violence of the Ligue, and one of whom was the celebrated Pithou. Each in his turn composes a discourse, in which the excesses and ambition of the Liguers are made the object of a constant and well-sustained fire of buffooneries, jests, biting parodies, pleasantries of every description, sparkling epigrams, sarcasms, and puns, and which is placed in the mouth of one of the speakers in this memorable assembly. It is prefaced by a treatise on the virtues of the Catholicon, or grand nostrum for all political diseases. While preparations are making for the assembly of the estates, two quack doctors, one a Spaniard, the other a native of Lorraine (the Cardinals of Plaisance and Pelevé), make their appearance at the Louvre, and vaunt the virtues of their drug, the *higuiero d'infierno*, and the wonderful effects it had worked in the hands of the Spaniard, a few of which may serve for a sample of the whole. “Let a king who never leaves his cabin amuse himself with refining this drug in his Escurial, let him write a word in Flanders to

father Ignatius, sealed with the Catholicon, he will find him a man who (*salvâ conscientiâ*) will assassinate his enemy whom he has not been able to vanquish in arms during twenty years." This, of course, is an allusion to the murder of the prince of Orange. "Go and serve as a spy in the camp, in the trenches, at the cannon, in the king's chamber, and in his councils, yea, though men know you for such; yet if you have taken in the morning but one grain of *higuiero*, whoever shall tax, reprove, or accuse you of it, shall be esteemed a Huguenot, or a favourer of heretics."—"Have no religion, mock in sport, and as much as you will, the priests and sacraments of the Church, and all law, both of God and man; eat flesh in Lent in despite of the Church; you need no other absolution nor better pardon than half a dram of this Catholicon."—"Would you very quickly become a cardinal? rub one of the horns of your cap with *higuiero*, it will become red, and you shall be made a cardinal, though you were the most incestuous and ambitious primate in the world." This is an allusion to Pierre d'Espinac, archbishop of Lyons.

The description of the meeting of the States opens with a caricatured procession of the personages concerned in it, and an account of the tapestries supposed to be hung round the hall in which they meet, representing the various crimes and defeats of the Ligue. Then the order of the seats is enumerated, and the duke of Mayenne opens the business with a bitterly satirical speech, the author of which is not known. The chief of the Liguers is made to give a detailed enumeration of the various acts of violence and injustice committed in the name of the *sainte union*, and sums up his services to the country by asserting,

that "through our good diligence we have brought to pass, that this kingdom, which was nothing else but a garden of all pleasure and abundance, is now become a great and wide universal cemetery, full of many fair painted crosses, biers, gallowses, and gibbets." Addresses of a similar kind, by different writers, are put in the mouths of the other speakers of the assembly, until we arrive at monsieur d'Aubray, who represented the *tiers-état*, and whose discourse, the work of Pierre Pithou, is a model of indignant and persuasive eloquence, striking a death-blow at the cause which had been undermined and disarmed by the raillery of the preceding portion of the work. The confusion attendant upon this discourse breaks up the assembly, and the whole ends with a description of satirical pictures and mottoes which the reporter beholds on the staircase of the Louvre, and with a collection of no less satirical verses, said to have been composed by Passerat and Nicholas Rapin. After the first editions of the "*Satyre Ménippée*," several supplements were added to it, consisting of a discourse by the printer on the meaning of the term *higuiero d'infierno*; of the news from the regions of the moon (a clever imitation of Lucian and Rabelais); and of the "*Histoire des Singeries de la Ligue*," all of which will be found in the new edition indicated at the head of the present article.

With the fall of the Ligue, the battle of the Reformation in France may be considered to have ended, and although their leader and many of their friends had, for political reasons, embraced the catholic faith, the Huguenots had secured for a while the privilege of enjoying their opinions. They still existed as a political party, and as such were drawn

into many of the troubles of the earlier part of the seventeenth century ; but the great fight for religious freedom was then carried on in Germany. One of the latest Protestant satires—directed against the conversions which followed the accession of Henri IV. to the throne—was the “ Confession du sieur de Sancy,” composed during the latter years of the sixteenth century, and attributed, with apparently good reason, to Theodore Agrippa d’Aubigné, a zealous and active Protestant, known by a history of his own time, and by another satirical work, “ The Adventures of the baron de Feneste.” Nicolas de Harlay, seigneur de Sancy, an intriguing person, who probably had no respect for religion at all, was remarkable for the number of times which he had changed from one religion to the other, previous to his final conversion to the catholic faith in 1597, in imitation of the king, although he attributed this conversion to the convincing arguments and solid instruction of the bishop of Evreux, who was congratulated upon his success by pope Clement VIII. It is to this bishop—who had boasted of the dexterity with which he could argue alternately in favour of religion or atheism—that the pretended confession is dedicated. This work, divided into two books, is a very severe and very clever satire on the Romish Church, and is full of minute allusions to the historical events of the times, which renders it difficult to give an abstract of it. In the first book the writer ridicules the pretended authority of the pope, who, he says, has the power *facere infecta facta* ; the authority of tradition ; the power of the saints ; purgatory ; justification by works (a chapter full of scandalous anecdotes) ; miracles and pilgrimages (a chapter worthy of Henri

Etienne); the worship of relics; religious vows; the methods of conversion; and transubstantiation. Of traditions, Sancy says, "We anger the Huguenots very much, when we show them that the authority of the church and tradition teach us to acknowledge the Scriptures, although the canonical Scriptures do not teach us to acknowledge the authority of the Church of Rome or of tradition. In fact, we ought to hold by the books of the church, and not by the canonical books, otherwise the heretics would diffame our affairs with their passages from the bible. But to cut the matter more short, I should be of opinion, not to reckon for tradition, the ancient doctors of the first six centuries; during which the church was not yet ennobled; those splendid temples were not built; the popes of Rome held their thrones in caverns; and, to be brief, the popes might pass for ministers of the first troubles, and the church smelt of the Huguenot, or rather of the faggot." Speaking of miracles, he says, "The late cardinal, of good memory *par excellence*, that is to say, of Lorraine, having heard that the mareschal de Fervaques, of good memory also, had discovered a prostitute, whom the priest of Belovet, otherwise called the Holy Man, was teaching to counterfeit a demoniac, in order to have a notable miracle for the next Pentecost; that great prelate exclaimed against the impiety of the said Fervaques, saying, that, although the miracles may be false, they were, nevertheless, useful *ad pias fraudes*, pious frauds; and in fact, his miracle had a wonderful effect, for in a place which was not before inhabited, there were built in three years eighty houses and fifty inns, which were not enough to lodge all the pilgrims who crowded from different quarters, and even great lords from foreign parts; and if there

were no other miracle than the building of houses, and the extent and duration of an opinion converted into belief without foundation, there is not a schismatic but must confess that that is wonderful, and it is what makes the heretics mad, when they see that the people are burning with good intentions." After a most edifying dissertation on the virtues of relics, Sancy says, "As for me, if I don't make so much of relics, and if I only pretend to adore them, hold me excused; for going one evening to Bosny, two leagues from Orleans, which is the seat of messieurs of St. Lazarus, I was all astonished to hear, as I was getting up in the morning, a quantity of bells ringing round the house, and to see the banner and the cross, and a large body of the canons of St. Aignan of Orleans enter, yea, as many as could enter into a little gallery leading to the privies. The fact was, that a wench of the chevalier Salviata, then grand prior of the order, had fished up some coffers which had been thrown in time of war into the privy. In one of the coffers she found a solitary box, on which was written *R. D. Coti*. The commander, being informed of this, hastened to the spot with his secretary, named Valderie, who took the *R* with the point for the father of St. Catherine. Thereupon, it was strictly forbidden to touch it, and his master and he went to fetch the bishop of Orleans; the doctors in theology, and among others Picard, called together in consultation, came to the resolution that this box ought to be opened by the sacred hands of the bishop, in the presence of the neighbouring processions. There they were just arrived in the morning, and after a mass of the Holy Spirit, they wash the bishop's fingers with holy water, he advances three steps on his knees towards the coffer,

opens the box—and it turns out to be a box of good Cotignac of Orleans, and thus, since prophecies are only known by their fulfilment, it turned out that the *R.* signified *Reste*, and *D. Coti* was for *de Cotignac*.” In a chapter on martyrs in the second book, which treats other subjects in a similar style with the first, Sancy observes, “Of all the books which are calculated to make a heretic, or at least which a good catholic ought to avoid, I know no one so dangerous, after the Bible, as that great book of martyrs. For it is a great case, to see five, six, or seven thousand dead, who have all the marks of a true martyrdom, namely, probity of life, the purity of the cause of religion, not mixed with less holy feelings, and above all with the choice of life and death in their power up to the last moment. By this we have lost many who have seen the preachers of former times having for a pulpit the scaffold, or the ladder, or the stake.” It will be easily seen that the confession of Sancy, is a burlesque defence of the doctrines and practice of the Romish Church, put into the mouth of an insincere convert, and addressed to a would-be universal converter. It appears to have been written during the closing years of the sixteenth century, and was published at the beginning of the seventeenth.

In closing this rapid sketch of the history of satirical literature in France during the sixteenth century, I will say but a few words only on the too celebrated “*Moyen de Parvenir*,” the reputed work of Beroalde de Verville. The wit of Rabelais still retained its influence, and we find his style not unfrequently imitated even by the Protestant satirists. The excesses of religious persecution which had characterized the latter half of the century, cast a dark shade over the style of the controversialists; but the gay

licentiousness of the wits of the age of François I, again held up its head under Henry IV, and gave a character to the manners of the seventeenth century, which, particularly in the latter half of the century, was felt in England as much as in France. One of the most conspicuous and remarkable of the early writers of this school was Beroalde de Verville, who, born about the middle of the sixteenth century, had been educated as a Huguenot and a mathematician, was subsequently converted to Romanism, became an ecclesiastic, and was received a canon of the chapter of St. Gatien, at Tours, in 1593. In that quality he distinguished himself as a writer of romances chiefly remarkable for their dulness and obscenity, and he published secretly, about the year 1610, the “*Moyen de Parvenir*.” This book describes a kind of learned symposium, at which all kinds of characters, ancients and moderns, warriors, and men (and women) of letters, pagans, and catholics, and protestants, meet together in a strange pell-mell, and converse together in a style so licentious as to set at defiance all attempts at entering into any abstract of it. Its object appears to be to scoff at all philosophy and religion; it contains sarcasms against the monks and the Romish Church, as well as against the Reformers; but it is composed in a pure style, with so much talent and wit, that some have supposed that it must be the work of an older and abler writer, the manuscript of which had fallen into Beroalde’s hands, and which he had revised and given to the world.

FINIS.



CHISWICK PRESS :—PRINTED BY WHITTINGHAM AND WILKINS,
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

Library of Old Authors.

Elegantly Printed in fcap. 8vo.

*The following Works are already published, each Author
sold separately.*



THE DRAMATIC AND POETICAL
WORKS OF JOHN MARSTON. Now first col-
lected, and edited by J. O. HALLIWELL. 3 vols. 15s.

THE VISION AND CREED OF PIERS
PLOUGHMAN. Edited by THOMAS WRIGHT; a
new edition, revised, with additions to the Notes and Glossary, 2
vols. 10s.

INCREASE MATHER'S REMARKABLE PRO-
VIDENCES OF THE EARLIER DAYS OF AMERICAN
COLONIZATION. With Introductory Preface by GEORGE
OFFOR. Portrait. 5s.

JOHN SELDEN'S TABLE TALK. A new and im-
proved Edition, by S. W. SINGER. Portrait. 5s.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM DRUM-
MOND OF HAWTHORNDEN. Edited by W. B. TURNBULL.
Portrait. 5s.

FRANCIS QUARLES' ENCHIRIDION. Contain-
ing Institutions—Divine, Contemplative, Practical, Moral, Ethical,
Economical, and Political. Portrait. 3s.

THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS IN PROSE
AND VERSE OF SIR THOMAS OVERBURY. Now first
collected. Edited, with Life and Notes, by E. F. RIMBAULT.
Portrait after Pass. 5s.

GEORGE WITHER'S HYMNS AND SONGS OF
THE CHURCH. Edited, with Introduction, by EDWARD FARR.
Also the Musical Notes, composed by ORLANDO GIBBONS. With
Portrait after Hole. 5s.

GEORGE WITHER'S HALLELUJAH; OR, BRI-
TAIN'S SECOND REMEMBRANCE, in Praiseful and Penitential
Hymns, Spiritual Songs, and Moral Odes, with Introduction by
EDWARD FARR. Portrait. 6s.

LIBRARY OF OLD AUTHORS.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF THE REV. ROBERT SOUTHWELL. Now first completely edited by W. B. TURNBULL. 4s.

THE MISCELLANIES of JOHN AUBREY, F.R.S. (on Omens, Dreams, Day Fatality, Apparitions, Portents, Knockings, &c. &c.) The fourth Edition, with some Additions, and an Index, Portrait, and Cuts. 4s.

THE ILIADS OF HOMER, Prince of Poets, never before in any Language truly translated, with a Comment on some of his chief Places. Done according to the Greek by GEORGE CHAPMAN, with Introduction and Notes by the Rev. RICHARD HOOPER. 2 vols. with Portrait of Chapman, and Frontispiece. 12s.

THE ODYSSEYS OF HOMER, truly translated by GEORGE CHAPMAN. With Introduction and Notes by the Rev. RICHARD HOOPER. 2 vols. with Frontispiece. 12s.

HOMER'S BATRACHOMYOMACHIA, HYMNS AND EPIGRAMS. HESIOD'S WORKS AND DAYS. MUSÆUS' HERO AND LEANDER. JUVENAL'S FIFTH SATIRE. Translated by GEORGE CHAPMAN. With Introduction and Notes by the Rev. RICHARD HOOPER. 6s.

THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF JOHN WEBSTER. Edited, with Notes, &c., by WM. HAZLITT. 4 vols. £1

THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF JOHN LILLY, (*the Euphuist.*) Now first collected, with Life and Notes by F. W. FAIRHOLT. 2 vols. 10s.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF RICHARD CRASHAW, Canon of Loretto. Now first completely edited by W. B. TURNBULL. 5s.

LA MORTE D'ARTHURE. The History of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Compiled by Sir Thomas Malory, Knt., edited from the edition of 1634, with Introduction and Notes by THOMAS WRIGHT. 3 vols. 15s.

ANECDOTES AND CHARACTERS OF BOOKS AND MEN. Collected from the conversation of Mr. Pope and other eminent Persons of his time. By the Rev. JOSEPH SPENCE. Now first published, with Notes, Life, &c., by S. W. SINGER. The second Edition ; with Portrait. 6s.

Several other Works of our good old Authors are in progress.

Published by JOHN RUSSELL SMITH,
36, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

RAL - RG 495
W. Parsch
Buchbinderel
Peiting/München

Wright, Thomas

Essays on archaeological subjects, and on various questions connected with
the history of art, science, and literature in the middle ages In two
volumes

Bd.: II

London 1861

Brit. 553 th-2

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10282362-5